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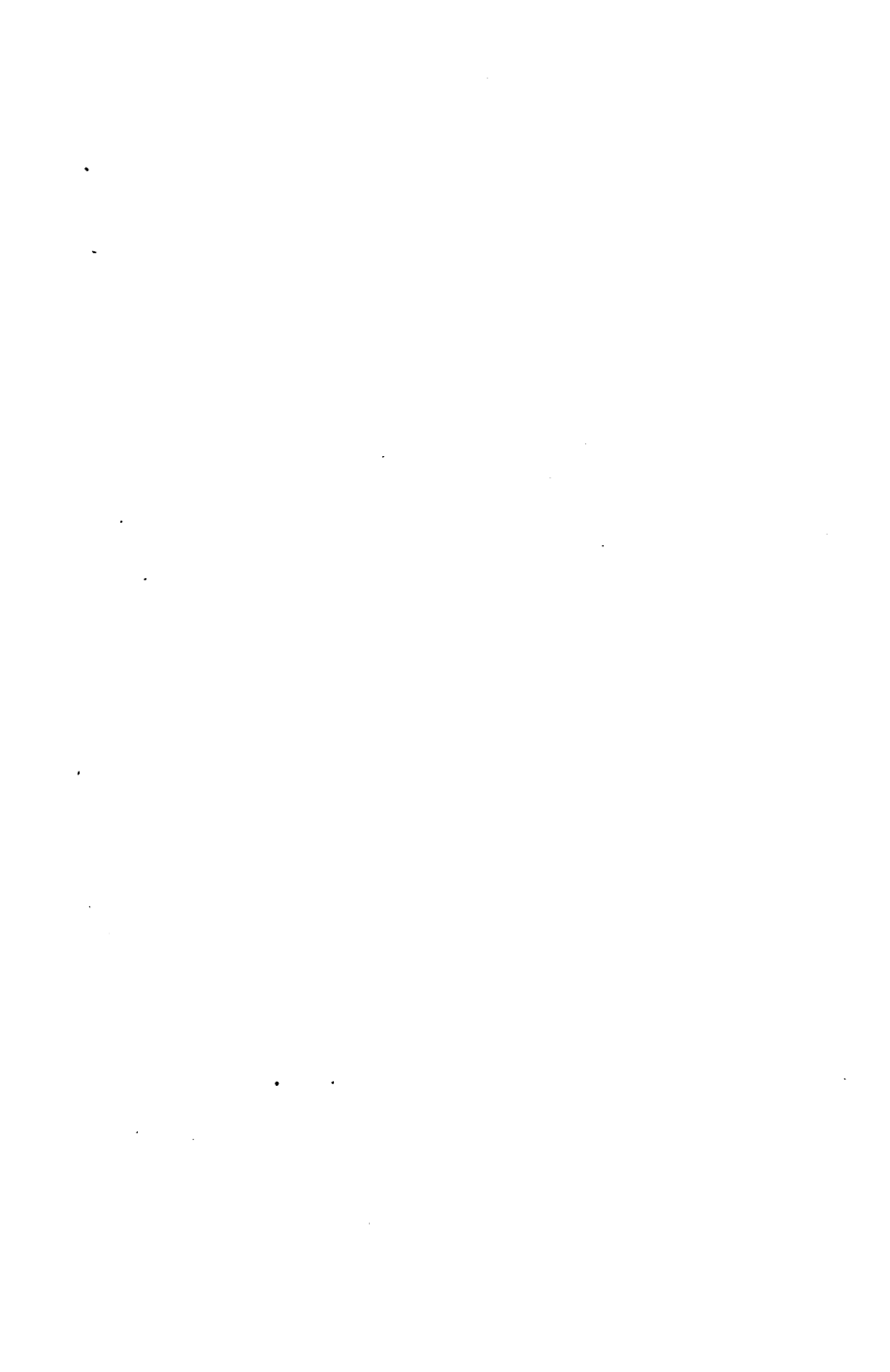
INSTITUTIONAL WORK
FOR THE
COUNTRY CHURCH.

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**INSTITUTIONAL WORK
FOR THE
COUNTRY CHURCH.**

COMPILED BY
REV. CHARLES E. HAYWARD,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
REV. CHARLES H. MERRILL.

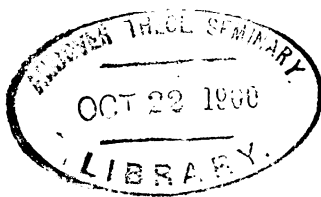
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The Gift

Rev. Charles C. Maynard

**To those who have so generously
contributed to this work,
is this little book
inscribed.**



57.17

PREFACE.

If this humble work fails to receive a cordial reception, I shall hold myself entirely responsible. If it meets the approval of those who chance to read its pages, I shall attribute its success to the excellent chapters of my coadjutors.

~~It is a pleasure to me to receive such help as~~

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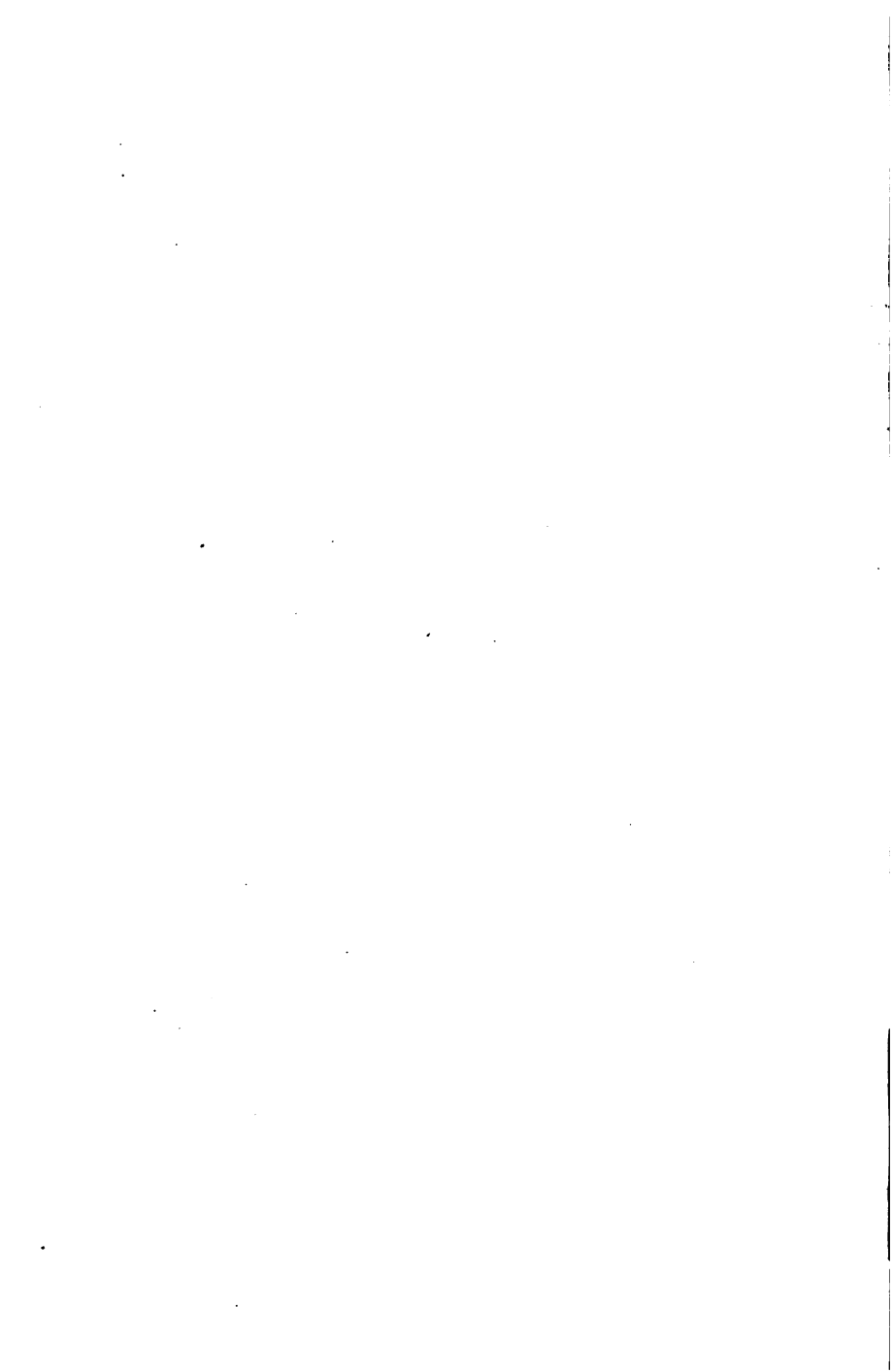
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itself, and I have here only to express my gratitude and appreciation to the writers, for their cordial falling in with my proposal, and for their exceedingly generous and excellent contributions.

CHARLES E. HAYWARD.

March, 1900.



INTRODUCTION.

The word "Institutional" has of late become a name to conjure with in all discussions of church work. So far as these discussions have made clear the ends sought by those who are working under this banner, no one can criticise the use made of the term; but the question has sometimes arisen whether this use has not been too restricted. If by "Institutional Church" is meant an organization that ministers to the social, intellectual, industrial life of the community, as well as to the spiritual, if these are the ends sought and this be the meaning of the term, then there are many churches that are doing this work without taking to themselves the name. And especially is this true of the country churches. While life in communities that are thinly settled has a tendency to develop a marked individuality, and while this individuality has always asserted itself in striking forms in the country church, yet it is this organization more than any other which is potent in counteracting that tendency and drawing all together into one communal family. And working toward this end it has great advantages. Unlike the churches in town or in city, it has few if any competitors in its social mission. At times it stands alone in offering the opportunity for

social gatherings and intercourse. For this reason the Sunday services are well attended, the mid-week prayer meeting "draws" the young, and every appointment for gathering together is joyfully welcomed.

Recognizing the fact that the ends sought by the "Institutional Church" may be gained by those that are not entitled to the name, it is well to call attention to the peculiar advantages the country churches have for securing these ends, and suggest some of the means best adapted for this purpose. Methods must vary with conditions. Country life differs in many ways from life in the city. Organizations must recognize this difference. Imitation that is formal and servile will defeat its ends. The stripling cannot war effectively in Saul's armor. Theories must bear the test of practical experience.

The State of Vermont furnishes a favorable field for the development of the country church. More distinctively than any other state, it is free from the dominance of city life and congested communities. And the record made by the churches of the state shows that they have been ready in some measure to take advantage of their peculiar situation. If there are no organizations that may bear the name "Institutional" there are many that can bear the name "Inspirational," through whose quickening power society has developed along those lines that make for the uplift of all. The contributors to this book have been privileged to work in such churches as collaborators, ministering and ministered unto; they have

shared in the prosperity of these organizations ; they understand their limitations ; they appreciate their advantages. As practical workers, out of the wisdom gained by experience, they speak.

REV. CHARLES H. MERRILL.

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CHAPTER I.

The Country Church.

The country church presents one of the most difficult and complex religious problems of our day. I am not ignorant or unmindful of the problem of the city church. I have had some experience with "down-town" churches, and I appreciate their situation ; yet knowing something of each I am persuaded that the smaller villages and farming communities present conditions, while not so striking, perhaps, yet just as difficult of solution as any found in the over-crowded cities.

Much is being said just now of the marvelous growth of our cities, and great anxiety is felt lest the churches fail to meet the changing conditions and new demands of city life. Little is said of the country towns, that are slowly but surely being depopulated by this tremendous movement from country to city, and little anxiety is felt for the country churches that are being robbed of their best blood by this city-ward drift.

It is high time that those interested in the welfare of the kingdom should stir themselves to meet the problem of the country church. I cheerfully concede the point that the city is the centre, the strategic point of the battle between good and evil ; but it by no means follows that the country towns can be

safely left to care for themselves. It is true that one-half of the increasing populations of the cities are foreign born ; it is also true that a large majority of the other half are not only the most enterprising, the most intelligent and the most valuable citizens of the country towns from whence they came, but they become the leading and most influential citizens of the city. It is important, therefore, that this source of the cities' influx should be kept as pure and wholesome as possible.

I do not need to argue that the country church has much, if not everything, to do with the standard of the religious, moral, intellectual and social life of the community in which it is located. There was a time when the church was the centre of all life, it ought to be the centre of all life to-day. As it is, it has a strong and potent influence, but by no means the influence that it ought to have or would have if alive to its obligation and privilege.

Conditions have greatly changed in the past few years. But few country churches can be said to be in a flourishing condition ; the majority are barely holding their own, some are losing ground, all are struggling heroically for life, but the tide is against them, something must be done. The country church problem must be solved. I am not now arguing for or against the "decline of religion in rural communities." I am speaking simply of the present condition of the country church. I am aware that now

and then a new church is organized in these country villages, and that an occasional dying church is revived. I am not a pessimist with respect to the country church, unmistakable signs of promise are clearly visible; nevertheless, the present condition of many country churches is, to say the least, deplorable.

As a social institution the country church has far less competition than the city church, and yet the country church of to-day is not the social centre that it was fifty years ago. This is largely its own fault; the country church is slow to discern the "signs of the times." City churches have sensed the social trend and the down-town churches in particular do a large share of their work through the machinery of societies and clubs, but the country church, still conservative, relies on the old methods and wonders why her people are so often attracted away to some other social institution. There was a time when the church was the centre, not only of the religious thought and life, but of all life outside of the monotony of the farm; this is not so to-day, the church is only one of the many avenues of life. This is a social age, an age of social and fraternal societies. The country church suffers more from these organizations than she is willing to admit. In almost every little hamlet there are secret societies, like the Free Masons, Odd Fellows, Grangers and others. There are also Social, Artistic and Literary Clubs without number. Too often the church yields the right-of-

way, complacently, to these social societies, and simply bemoans the fact that the people are attracted away from the church. It is the business of the church to keep these people. The church can be, and should be, the center of all life in every small country community.

Before we go further it may be well to examine briefly some of the most apparent causes that have led to the decline of the country church.

I. That the population of our country towns is decreasing will not be denied, and this is evidently one great cause of the church's growing weakness. The old men die and the young men remove to the cities. This is especially true with old established families. This tremendous movement from country to city is beyond doubt a permanent condition, it is therefore out of the question to suppose that we can wholly stem the tide. Some little may be done by the way of improving the conditions of the country town, thereby making country life more desirable. This movement from country to city has brought with it a double problem; while the cities are increasing in population the country towns are decreasing. "The congestion of the one has been accompanied by the exhaustion of the other." It is also to be noticed that while the people go, the churches stay. A church is wonderfully tenacious of its own existence.

II. A second cause of decay is found in the character of those who come in to take the place of those removing. There are but few deserted farms in New England or in any other part of the United States. An occasional deserted farm-house may be seen here and there but that does not necessarily mean deserted farms ; this however, is true, in New England especially, and to some extent all over the country, that the population from which the country church must draw its support is changing. The rental system is making headway. Foreigners are coming in to manage the farms. "While the numbers have been growing less, the type has been growing poorer." In fact some country churches have a constituency so heterogeneous that it becomes practically a mission field.

III. Another cause is apparent, the average country church is almost sure to be dead set against any change. Changing conditions demand new methods. A church to be successful must study and meet the demands of the times. Every age makes its own peculiar demands, this the country church forgets or disregards. "This conservatism and narrowness are fundamental conditions of the problem of the country church." The average country church is plodding along in practically the same old ruts of half a century ago. Not only in theology, but in practical Christian work the country church has made little or no progress in the last fifty years.

It is not at all strange that it is losing its influence, nor that the young people find stronger attractions elsewhere. The young people of to-day are active, they want something to do, and they will have it; let the church give them work and it can retain their interest. Do not estimate the worth of the young people to the church by their activity in the prayer-service, and remember this also, it is not a question of prime importance whether these young people are of value to the church, the question is, is the church of any value to them? Does it supply any felt want of theirs? These active social propensities of the young are God's rich gifts to a poor dying world. The church should furnish legitimate channels in which this abundant life can spend and be spent.

These are some of the more prominent causes that have led to the decline of the country church. Every cause has its effect, and the effect upon the country church has been to raise serious problems. As the causes are different in different localities, so the problems are different. Each church has its own peculiar problems, and yet there are a few problems that are common to a large number of country churches. Let me repeat, lest some one misunderstand me, what I have already said in substance. Not all country churches are on the decline, not even a majority perhaps. There are some, not many, that are in a marked flourishing condition. Some

rural communities have remained unchanged, they are holding their own, both as to numbers and character of population, consequently the church has been sustained. Again there is an occasional hamlet that has taken on new life, some industry has sprung up, or located in town, and the quiet little village has grown to a town of considerable size, and the church has kept pace with the forward movement. Such conditions create problems all their own. There are a large number of country churches, altogether too many, that from one cause or another have lost standing and power.

I. The first and most serious problem of a very small number of country churches, is how to regain and hold the faith and respect of the people of the community for the church. I am aware that some will resent the suggestion that the people are losing their faith in the churches. If any one should tell me that this was true of country communities in general, I should deny it at once, for I know that it is not a fact. It is true of a small number of country communities, this I know from experience and personal observation. If any one is not convinced of the truth of this fact, let them investigate thoroughly, without prejudice, and distinguish carefully between Faith in Christianity and Faith in the Churches, which are two very different things, and they will, I think, be convinced that in many of our country towns, where from two to four little churches live by

preying one upon another, the people question the authority of their mission and the necessity of their existence. If I were asked to account for this fact I should have no hesitancy in saying that it was the fault of the churches themselves. The rivalry so often witnessed between these small country churches is something fearful. This spirit has been fostered by sectarian preaching. Our country pulpits have emphasized denominational distinctions and differences more than Christ, and are by no means free from the charge of stirring up jealousies and animosities more than love for the brethren.

Almost every little village has two, three, and sometimes four or five struggling churches. That two and two equal four is not plainer than that better work could be done in these towns with half the number of churches. As it is these churches have to struggle for their life and in their struggle they contend as often with each other as with their common foe, "The world, the flesh and the devil." It is certainly a travesty on Christianity, that in a little community, not able to support and give legitimate work to more than one church, there should exist three or four churches, in a dying condition, kept alive chiefly by the friction created by rubbing one against the other. An over-churched community is as much a cause of shame as a community without a church. "It seems desirable to so present Christ to the people in our sparsely settled communities, as

elsewhere, that they may be won to him through the harmonious, loving service of his followers, rather than driven from him by the dissensions and divisions among those who claim to follow Him. The Christo-centric and Christo-livable type of Christianity must be set up in the country towns."

II. A second and exceedingly difficult problem for many of our country churches is how to gain and retain the interest of the young people. This problem is not confined to country churches, but there are some difficulties in the problem that are characteristic of country towns. In large towns and cities the majority of young people live within easy reach of the churches. In rural communities many of the young people live on farms scattered from one-half mile, to five miles from the church. This fact adds new difficulties to the problem. The younger of the young people are not allowed to go out nights at all, the older young people find it quite a task after a hard day's work on a farm or in the kitchen either to walk or drive to town. Now these young people are full of life, they need recreation and amusement, and when they do get into town they want a good time, they don't want to be shut up and kept quiet, and you cannot blame them, at least, I can not. It is not surprising that after the dull monotony of the farm they should crave innocent excitement. In this little village it is not an uncommon thing to see a little group of young men and boys on the park enjoying a

rough-and-tumble wrestling-match, God bless them, and the village Dominie is not infrequently among them. Do you ask, "What shall we do for them?" There is but one thing that you can do and be successful, and that is, give them just what they want. Seek to satisfy their love for social amusement, its legitimate, don't crush it or try to restrain it, use it and thank God for its abundance. Enter into their sports and amusements, and never ask them to give up a thing until you have provided something better of a similar nature. Young people are easily led, the difficulty has been that they have been let alone, and like the colt, the longer you let them run, the harder they are to manage.

In many towns there are a sufficient number of young people in the village itself to support and carry on any undertaking successfully, but here again is a difficulty, there are two or three churches in the village and young people must be loyal to their own church no matter how much the kingdom of God suffers. In very few towns has the brotherhood of service conquered petty jealousies. Oh! the shame of it. How the kingdom suffers at the hands of its friends.

III. Still another problem is found in the out-lying districts. How to make connection between these and the church? There are little neighborhood settlements scattered here and there at varying distances from the village centre. And all along the high-

ways are scattered the farm-houses where live men, women and children, every one of whom ought to have some connection with the church. How to make this connection is one of the difficult problems that must be solved. There was a time in the history of these towns when almost every family in the township was represented in the little church, to-day it is not so. Districts several miles from the church are very likely to be non-church-going. Farmers' families, everybody knows, have many and serious hindrances to regular church attendance. I am often told by those who are regular attendants that Sunday is the hardest day in the week for them, and I do not doubt it in the least, but this only emphasizes the problem.

This is indeed a most difficult problem for the country church. It would be more serious than it is were there no signs of promise visible. This great movement towards centralization, of which we have already spoken, has its good as well as its bad effect upon the country town. Depopulation is its bad effect, concentration is its good effect. It is changing the customs and manner of life of those who remain in the country. It is felt along the highways, in the back districts, upon the hillside farms. The village is fast becoming the center. Hither come the farmers from all directions to trade. On market day the teams line up in front of the stores, or stand hitched in the neighboring sheds. Little groups of

farmers may be seen standing here and there discussing their common interests. Problem—How to call all of the teams together and line them up at 10.30 o'clock Sunday morning?

Every little village has now its academy or well equipped school. The town system of schools has called the boys and girls from the little district schools to the high school at the village centre. The village supports a popular lecture-course, and this is patronized by many from the remote corners of the town. The cry for better roads emphasizes the tendency towards centralization. This movement brings to the church a most vital suggestion. The village has become the centre. The stores have their attraction. The school has its attraction. The lecture-course and a hundred other things call the people to the village centre. Here is the church's opportunity; will she seize it? will the church wake up to its privilege, and regain its rightful place in the life of the community? Oh that our country churches might realize the attractive power of him who said: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth; will draw all men unto me." The living Christ, if lifted up, will solve every problem for the country church.

There are other problems that are peculiar to the country church that might be introduced here, and studied with profit, but I content myself with a few words more upon the general topic heading this

chapter. The country church stands sponsor for the country town ; if the country town needs " regeneration," and no one will claim that it is a paradise of innocency, it is clear to me that the reformation must come through the country church. The introduction of any outside agency is sure to fail. Prof. Anthony was right when he wrote, " The solution must proceed from the town itself. There is salvation by fiat no more for the town or church than for the individual.—Reform must be dynamic, working from within outward.—The town must solve its own problem." Institutional methods are good. Social settlement methods are good. They must not be copied from the city institutional and social work bodily, however, they must be adapted to the needs and conditions of country towns and country people. Neither can they be imported by a specialist with the declared purpose of turning the old town upside down. Country towns are not on the verge of extinction, nor is the country church. The country church is slow to adapt itself to changing conditions, but the same is true of the city church ; the only difference is that the city church can " move up-town " into pleasanter pastures, while the country church has to stand by and fight the battle single-handed. It is to the credit of the country churches that they have stood their ground so long and so well. While this re-adjustment is going on between the churches and their new environment, the country

towns suffer. It is only a matter of time, however, the "regeneration" of the country town will follow quickly upon the solution of the problem of the country church, and the solution of this problem will be found in an educated and trained ministry.



CHAPTER II.

The Country Minister.

The solution of the problem of the country church is to be found in an educated and trained ministry. In most country towns the church can be made to be the center of the life of the community, and the life of the church depends very largely upon the life of the pastor. It is in the power of the pastor to mould the church and through the church the community, up to his ideals. The real problem, therefore, is the problem of the ministry. Given a ministry trained in the right methods, and holding right ideals, and the problem of the country church would soon be solved.

Before referring directly to the special training required by the country pastor, I will note in a general way some peculiarities of the country pastorate. The country minister, like every other minister of the Gospel, is first and always a religious teacher. His one aim and purpose is to reveal God and lead men to Him. Precisely what training will best fit him to accomplish this end most effectually in the

country parish, is the problem. As in the city, so in the country, but more especially in the country, must the pastor interest himself in the affairs of the people. He must know the people, know all of the people, and know all of the people personally. He must enter every home and seek to make religion the leaven of that home, for in the country everything begins and ends with the home. He must become so familiar with all the people that he will know the relations sustained by different individuals to each other and to the community. The country pastor deals with individuals. His relations with the people are almost wholly personal. He only can be successful in a country parish who can meet men and women as such. It has been said that the country church could get on nicely with inferior men as leaders, but he who thinks thus is greatly mistaken. The country church needs the best men the ministry affords, not necessarily the most eloquent or the most learned men, but decidedly the best in respect to character and training.

The people who live in our small country villages and are scattered about on the farms, are in as much need of the right kind of spiritual instruction as any in the larger towns and cities. They are just as able also to appreciate the deep things of God. Their condition permits of meditation and congenial discussion in a marked degree. Their very isolation and monotonous round of daily life offer the best op-

portunity for the reception and assimilation of good wholesome energizing truth. The country pastor is wonderfully favored in the abundance of opportunity that is his for personal work.

Again he is greatly mistaken who thinks the country a paradise of simplicity and innocence. Any one who is familiar with country life knows that many and great are the evils and iniquities that prevail. Human nature is the same in the country as in the city. There are sins common in the country, and fostered by the country, that are rare in the city. The city slum has a successful rival in many country towns. Such sins as gossip, envy, jealousy, rivalry, malice, revenge, intemperance and carnal vice abound. The absence of public officials, and isolation in general are conditions which foster lawlessness and crime. While it is true that there is no better place to live and bring up children than the country affords, it is also true that the country possesses some of the darkest spots and most degraded human beings on the face of this earth. There are country towns, and country towns. There are delightful country towns, there are some that are not so delightful. There is as much difference in country towns as there is in cities, indeed there is more. Cities are very much alike. Country towns differ greatly.

The work of the country pastor has some very peculiar features that are worthy of notice as we pass. While the work is in general of the same kind

of spiritual activity as in the city, still there are peculiar features. The conditions and circumstances of the people require a thorough, careful and personal study. Their peculiar errors and needs must be thoroughly known to be met successfully. The work is personal, with individuals, and special to a large degree. Family feuds and quarrels often require the pastor to act as peacemaker; a very delicate task. Church quarrels divide not only the already too small congregation, but separate families and relatives, and in the country these controversies are apt to be long and severe. Great skill and tact as well as deep piety and strong faith are required by the country pastor. The pastoral office of the country minister is greatly magnified.

The average country parish is large and scattered, it includes not only the members of the church but many other families whom the minister is expected to minister and shepherd. This large calling list requires time and becomes a great task, a far greater task than an equal list in the city, because of the distance that has to be covered in getting from one family to another and the time that it is customary to give to each call. The fact that the congregation is thus scattered renders co-operation difficult. Country roads are not always the most delightful highways over which to travel, especially in mud-time, in fact there are eight out of the twelve months in the year when the roads are not to be depended

upon. One is not at all sure when an appointment is made for a public meeting that it will be possible for the people to come together. Great difficulty is experienced by every country pastor in securing the co-operation of any large number of his people. The work rests largely upon a few, the pastor has the initiative and often a greater part of the work to do himself. However, there is a forward movement which is very widespread for better roads in the country, this the church will do well to encourage.

The country pastor has a far greater influence over the community at large than his city brother. What he says and does are sure to receive attention. He may have great influence not only in the religious but in the social and intellectual life of the community. The whole life of the community may be shaped and moulded by him if he be a wise and prudent man. In the broad field of recreation and amusement the country pastor may prove himself a factor for good. It is often if not always his privilege to assist at least in securing a pure and wholesome class of amusements. If he be not too bigoted he can do much in helping to elevate the standard of recreation among the young people. His presence and interest, if not participation in the out-door sports of the boys will do much toward lifting the standard of morality and manhood here. The country pastor is often called upon to take the initiative in providing lectures, readings, concerts and other

entertainments. He has a prominent part in all literary, debating and social clubs or societies. It will be his privilege to initiate a movement towards securing a town library or a public reading room. He will be especially interested in the kind of reading matter his people enjoy ; not only does the vile poisonous literature need be driven out, but good, wholesome, instructive reading needs be introduced. In short, an interest in the community in general, the welfare, beauty and healthfulness of the town should find a place in every pastor's heart. The country pastor has a rare opportunity, to be coveted by any worker in God's vineyard, and if he be a well-trained leader of strong personal faith and character his influence is practically unlimited.

It now remains for me to outline the special education and training required by a pastor of a country church. Conditions change, methods must change. We must meet present-day problems with present-day methods.

I. First then, the minister must be trained in Present-day Theology. I use the term, Present-day Theology, for lack of a better one. I know that I run a great risk of being misunderstood. I am not asking that the country pastor be trained in the last word of the Higher Critics or that he be versed in every new theory advanced or doctrine promulgated. I do plead that he be instructed to preach Christ and Bible truth, and not the teachings of men. I do ask

that the country pastor preach, teach and practice a Christian gospel both in and out of the pulpit.

A new type of Christianity must be developed in our country churches. The narrow-minded sectarian preaching of the past has been the death of the churches. The country church can make no progress under the leadership of a sectarian and conservative preacher, he must be a broad-minded, liberal, catholic man, laying emphasis in his preaching and teaching upon the fundamentals. The sectarian preacher is not himself wholly at fault, he is what his training has made him. It is just here that we detect the supremacy of Present-day Theology. The schools of yesterday gave the preacher a system of theology, and his denomination put their tenets in his hands and bid him go forth and preach them. The schools of to-day give the preacher a living Christ, and his church gives him the liberty to proclaim his message. Yesterday's preacher had a mission. To-day's preacher has a message. Yesterday's preacher found his authority in the church and the creed. The living Christ is the source of all authority to-day.

Prof. Anthony has said "that the average country church, in Theology and consequent Practical Christian living is where it was a half-century ago." If this is true, there is no one so much at fault as the country preacher. How can we expect that the "Christo-centric and Christo-livable type of Chris-

tianity" will be set up in the country if the preacher preaches "Isms" more than Christ? It is no excuse that the people like that style of preaching. They would not like it if they knew anything better. The ethics of present-day preaching are of supreme value to the country minister. A strong evangelical and evangelistic spirit, based upon a profound belief in the Father-hood of God, the Saviour-hood of Christ and the Brother-hood of man, coupled with deep personal consecration, are the theological pre-requisites of the country pastor.

II. Second ; the country pastor should be trained in Institutional methods. A depopulating non-church going community needs an Institutional church, fully as much as a populous non-church going community. Institutionalism is not the greatest need of the country church. The eloquent and learned preacher is not the greatest need of the country church. The country church should become Institutional that it may become Personal. The pastor should not limit his ministration to the church, the church under his leadership should minister to the community at large. The country town needs the personnel of Christian workers. The best way to build up a church is for the church to serve the community. The adoption of Institutional methods increases not diminishes the preacher's obligation to make strong, forceful, fervent appeals to the heart, mind and will of his hearers. My experience and

observation leads me to think that the church that relies wholly on the old methods will do a limited amount of work in a hard country parish to-day. I do not wish to be understood as condemning the old methods. They are good just as long as they work and no longer.

The pastor who succeeds in a hard country parish to-day in bringing into the church new members, and in elevating the standard of morality and Christian living in the community, must be able to secure the interest and co-operation of those whom he wishes to reach in some kind of work not strictly religious. There are a hundred ways in which the live pastor can interest and draw out those people who have no vital interest in the church. He must interest himself in every line of work that has for its aim and purpose the development of the social, moral and religious life of the people. If there is not already a natural leader, Christian leader, in each of these spheres he must himself take the lead until he can draw out and develop the latent talent and ordain them to the work. There is no lack of talent in our country villages, the only thing needed is some one capable of drawing out and developing that talent. No one can do it as well as the country pastor, but he must be a versatile man, full of magnetism, common sense and deep personal consecration, he need not be an orator, the cities may have the elo-

quence, give to the country church the trained leaders.

III. Third: To be successful in a country church the pastor should be trained in the scientific methods of sociology: A trained sociologist is not the country church's greatest need. A "Book-worm" is not the country church's greatest need. He who does not and will not know men cannot hope to reach men. He who speaks sneeringly of sociology as a "fad" has but little knowledge of what he is talking about. The sociological movement is born of God, and is destined to be the mightiest power behind the Gospel that the world has ever known. It has already given new life to the old and only Gospel, and imparted fresh vigor to the fundamental teachings of Christ. It has given an impetus to the growing consciousness that the kingdom of God is to be realized on earth. The minister should be trained in sociological methods, not that he may become a reformer of society, but that he may understand society. Sociology is the knowledge of human welfare. Knowledge is power. The pastor who cannot or will not investigate every condition of life of the community in which he lives and for which he works, should not flatter himself that he is doing all that can be done for the people.

I believe that it is in the power of the pastor and his family to do practically the same work for the community in which they live that the social

settlement does for the ward of the city in which it is located. It would be utterly impossible for any outside agency to come in and avowedly undertake any such work, but with wisdom and skill the pastor can suggest, introduce and accomplish much along many lines. What the country town needs is the inspiration of high ideals, the introduction of a new enthusiasm. I do not know who can bring in this new inspiration and new enthusiasm better than the pastor and his family. If there is any salvation for the country church and community, I am persuaded that it will have to come through the pastor of the country church. Strong, earnest preaching of Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of mankind, and the only hope of the world's redemption, backed by social and institutional work, is to my mind the best and only sure solution of the problem of the country church.

IV. Fourth: The country pastor must be trained in leadership. Leadership is commonly regarded as being wholly a natural gift. "He is a born leader," is a common expression, and carries with it the idea of the impossibility of becoming a leader through training. Very few men aspire to leadership so far beyond them does it seem. But leadership is as much a matter of character and training as of natural gift. Those rare qualities which produce it may be developed and trained quite as truly and readily as any other desirable human qualities. Some men are born leaders, others become leaders by training and

force of will. Such training as will fit the minister to become a leader is most desirable for the country pastor, for he is, if he is anything, a leader. A faultless life is a great possession and a great power, but add to this, strong faith, high ideals, and positive convictions, and you have a leader.

A leader is one who goes before the people, leading them on, inspiring them by his valor, encouraging them by his lofty courageous life and action. Such a one becomes at once the hope of the backward, the uncertain and the weak. Country people move slowly, inertia is their chief characteristic. They need the inspiration of a strong forceful character. Now leadership does not imply a conscious superiority. The true leader is not domineering or self-asserting, he is not stubborn or haughty. There is no superficial self-assertion, no assumption of superiority about the true leader. Leadership is born of faith in God and in man. He only can be a true leader who is himself willing to be led. Leadership is gained by the surrender of man's whole nature to the ideas which he accepts, and the subordination of every power and faculty to the promulgation and advancement of those ideas. It is not himself, but the principles he represents, that the true leader seeks to advance.

As Christian ministers we need a reincarnation of the positive character, aim and purpose of Jesus Christ. He was not over-confident, over-bearing or

dogmatic, but it was his positiveness that gave him his power, by it he compelled assent and obedience, without it he would have been but little better than the average preacher to-day.

Every minister should be trained to self-surrender and entire consecration of himself to his chosen work. No amount of talent or genius should be accepted for this or confounded with it. A man's talents may determine his place in the field but they can never determine his power. Every God-inspired minister will become a leader. He who cannot lead has no place in the pulpit, especially a country pulpit.



CHAPTER III.

Institutional Methods.

What the country church needs most today is a revival, not a revival after the manner of twenty-five years ago, not a spasmodic zeal, not a season of feverish excitement ; but a revival of intelligent devotion to the interests of the Church and the Kingdom.

One of the characteristics of the country church is zeal, another characteristic is inertia. This seeming paradox is easily explained. As a rule the country church depends upon special revival seasons for its life, rather than upon its regular services and daily ministration. The efforts of the average country church are very spasmodic. When the church is alive, it is very much alive ; and when it is dead it is very dead. "I bear them record that they have a zeal for God ; but not according to knowledge." "I know thy works that thou hast a name that thou livest, but art dead." It is true that conditions and circumstances beyond the control of the church tend to influence such action, but this only emphasizes the problem, it by no means solves it. The church should not permit its life to be governed or controlled by any outside influence.

There are certain seasons in the year when country people are preoccupied with domestic duties. Sugaring, haying, harvesting, these are all busy seasons with the farmer. Again there are times when the highways are practically impassable and co-operation is almost an impossibility. On the other hand there are seasons when the farmer has comparatively little to do. There are often weeks at a time when the chores comprise the greater part of the work ; at such times the people can be depended upon. The churches very naturally seize upon these occasions of leisure to push their interests, and too, very naturally content themselves with little aggressive work at other times.

We can not hope to change, not even to modify to any appreciable degree, these external conditions; yet they should not be allowed to entirely control our actions. Every country minister finds himself circumscribed by these limitations, and it seems hardly possible to find a way out, but we must find a way out ; we shall be inexcusable if we permit the old up and down method of Church life to continue. "Where there is a will there is a way," and we must find a way by which the country church may move more steadily on and up.

The ideas that control the life of the country church today are the ideas that governed the church a half-century ago. Present day ideas and methods have only here and there found their way into the

country church. The country church is self-centered, its efforts are all in its own behalf, the church is an end in itself, the "Doctrine of the Kingdom" is rarely heard in the country church. By seeking to save its life the country church is losing its life.

There is no excuse for the existence of any church today that does not become the leaven of the community in which it is located. Now the fact is that the community at large expects and receives little from the church, if outsiders give to the support of the church they give as they would give to any other charitable institution. Sometimes the church and community are at swords-points. A church can not expect to accomplish much until the community at large is favorably disposed to it and in hearty sympathy with its work. A church whose life and work are not such as to compel the sympathy of the community might as well not exist, and better not exist so far as the Kingdom of God is concerned.

Every church can do, and ought to do, such a work and be of such service to the community that men will be compelled to acknowledge its power and beauty, and be forced into its current or driven in silence beyond its reach. God has given the work of His Kingdom into the hands of His church, and His church can compel men to enter the Kingdom by making it hard for them to remain outside.

I am sometimes asked if what the country church most needs is not more positive preaching of Jesus

Christ and him crucified. I answer, yes! Preaching in country pulpits has been too much Denominational and Sectarian, too little centered in Christ. But in difficult fields even this faithful preaching must be supplemented by a faithful example of ministration. Prejudice must be removed, people must be brought within hearing of the gospel. The most faithful preaching of the truth to empty pews will not accomplish the desired results. The church has a great work to do, and to accomplish this work it must work hard seven long days every week.

I have two suggestions to offer to any and all who are interested in the work of the country church.

- 1st. We must interest all of the people in the work of the Church and Kingdom; if there be prejudice it must be removed; every individual must be made to look with favor upon the work of the church; this it is possible for the church to accomplish, this the church must do before it can expect great success.
- 2nd. Institutional methods are the best methods under the present conditions of society of accomplishing the desired result.

I. We must gather the people in, we must secure their interest. There is no end to the novel methods that have been tried to gather in and interest the people, many of them as useless as they are short lived. The method that has been most successful, and which in the past has been of untold value to the churches is known as the Revival. Revi-

val's will never become obsolete. So long as the church exists revivals will be in order, but the method of the revivals of the past must be discarded, conditions will not permit of its continuance ; as a method it is out of date, we have a far better method for the churches.

Sensational preaching has been tried as a remedy for empty pews, but this is, as it deserves to be, a failure. It has no lasting or permanent effect, certainly not for good. Any one can easily fill his church for a few successive Sabbaths. This method has no redeeming qualities, we can therefore dismiss it without further comment.

Many of our country churches have recognized that "Music hath charms to sooth the savage breast" and have sought to attract and win the people by the enlargement and perfection of their musical force and by special musical programs. This has proven a very successful agency. Music forms an important part of all public worship, and its perfection is as essential as that of any other part. Music is one of the pulpit's strongest auxiliary forces, and every church will do well to utilize all the talent within its reach, being careful not to overdo the matter.

Extensive advertising is another successful agency, and where it has not been carried to an extreme it has had a good and wholesome effect. This method has come to stay. There is little danger of using too much printer's ink. There is advertis-

ing that is legitimate, and advertising that is illegitimate, churches will seek to spread the work of their church and the kingdom in no doubtful way.

Many are the ways and means adopted by different churches in their attempt to reach and hold the people. The people must be reached, there can be no doubt about that. The Church must be made in the best sense popular. All the people must have some vital connection with it. It would seem that some method might be devised whereby the Church could advance its work and still avoid the evil effects of the methods of the past. Whatever method is employed it must be a permanent method, not one that will spend its force in a few weeks' time. It must be a method that will appeal to the reason and sense of all, nothing sensational or eccentric about it.

II. Institutional methods are the best methods under the present conditions of society of securing and holding the interest of all classes of people in the church and its work.

The evil effects of the old fashioned revival must be avoided, the church must not be led to feel that a revival of the old sort is a necessity, the people must not be excused from responsibility eleven months in the year and allowed to think that they can make up the work in one month. The church must not be led to feel dependent upon outside help. If the influence of the church is such that people are kept

from it and prejudiced against Christianity, we must not allow the members of the Church to rest in their carnal security by calling in some one from outside to counteract their influence and do their work. If the church and its pastor cannot secure conversions and lead the way to the kingdom they are to be pitied, and it only confirms them in their bad way to resort to outside help.

I have no quarrel with the evangelists providing they keep their proper place. Our larger towns and cities need the work of men with evangelistic gifts. Pastors of large city churches have not the time to work with any outside of their own large flock. Here the evangelist may find a field without a shepherd and a work not already manned by another. Again our frontier towns and even back settlements in the older states not under direct supervision, need the work of the evangelist. But I protest against evangelists coming into our country churches and confirming both pastor and people in their unhealthy condition, it matters not whether that condition is the result of lethargy or a misconception of duty and privilege, the result is the same. The pastor who cannot and will not do evangelistic work has no place in the ministry. I have no sympathy with the idea that the pastor is not and cannot be an evangelist, that is, that he cannot do all the evangelistic work needed to be done in his parish.

The life of the church should be like the flow of a great river, small, perhaps, in its beginning, but gaining steadily, little by little, as it flows on towards the great sea. Now it is a little swifter in its course, now a little deeper, but at each turn it gathers new strength and new power, never losing what it has already gained. No sudden diminution in its volume, and no sudden rise in its power. Too many churches are like the little stream that flows down the mountain side, subject to every changing condition. In the summer months the flow is almost if not quite inconceivable, but in the fall or in the spring, the pouring rain or the melting snow suddenly raises the stream until it overflows its banks and comes tumbling, rumbling down the mountain side making a great show and carrying all before it, washing away bridges, culverts and every place of safety, but no sooner has the rain stopped and the snow gone than the great swollen stream subsides and only ruin and devastation are seen in its track.

The attempt to build up the church and the kingdom by any such means as the spasmodic effort that is often witnessed when outside help is relied upon is wrong, for it is abnormal. The old Biblical way of child-training and Christian-nurture is the only legitimate method for our churches to adopt. The steady growth and daily additions of such as

shall be saved is to be most desired by all our churches.

Home training is deficient, parents are delinquent, the church cares too little about the child that is theirs by divine right. "The promise is to you and your children." Boys and girls should grow up in the church, it is their home. "Train up a child in the way that he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." Give the young people something to do, interest them in the work of the church and they will not go elsewhere. The live church will furnish work and recreation for all of its young people, such work and recreation as will interest them. How much easier and more sensible it is to hold and train the child, than to let him run wild for a season and then try to catch him by the lasso method?

The end need never be lost sight of, not even in the most earnest and zealous effort to secure a thorough working of the method. Institutional methods have proven the best of all attempts in solving the problem of the city down-town churches. They are successful in the country so far as they have been tried. There are problems in the country church that have been successfully met by institutional work. It has been said that the adoption of institutional methods is not conducive to spiritual life in the churches, and that it detracts from the simple aim of the church. I answer this objection by say-

ing that the opposite has been the experience of those churches where these methods have been tried. The spiritual life of the church, instead of waning, has been perceptibly raised. The type and outward manifestation has been changed. The emotional prayer-meeting exhortation has disappeared, but in its place has appeared a more intelligent discussion and reasonable appeal to the higher motives of the Christian life. Passive piety has been superseded by an active planning and co-operation. The spread-eagle oratory of the pulpit has given place to earnest, quiet but eloquent exposition and application of the laws of the Christian life. Life is emphasized instead of creed. The social conscience has been inspired. Loyalty to Jesus Christ has been made supreme. Denominational rivalry is discouraged. The Fatherhood of God, the Saviourhood of Christ and the Brotherhood of man are the three great facts emphasized.

The country church seeking to become institutional, must not copy direct from city institutional churches. The country church needs to become inspirational rather than institutional. It needs to be institutional only that it may be inspirational. Machinery is not so much needed as power. Our country churches possess power, but it is latent. How may it be aroused? We answer, by the adoption of institutional methods. We think that a wise choice and faithful use of the methods outlined in

this book will do much towards arousing the latent energy of our country churches. These methods have all been tried by honest and wise pastors and found helpful. We recommend them to the churches.



CHAPTER IV.

The Problem of Religious Instruction by the Church.

It seems evident that we are standing at the beginning of a period when the old emphasis upon religious instruction by the church is to be restored. The day when the children fled to the shed and cellar upon the advent of the minister in his pastoral round is giving place to the time when he gathers the children about him in his study and in the Sunday school rooms to be their teacher and friend. This is a cause of congratulation. The children have been officially neglected too long. But the new attention brings into clearness new problems.

The first of these is the problem of limitation. Every religious worker has always known that the source of all religious influence is primarily in the home, and that here, too, is the center of all sound and effective teaching. The Protestant emphasis is upon the home, not upon the priest and the catechism in the church. This paper is not a plea for the revival of priestly instruction to the exclusion of home teaching. The latter can never be displaced. The home remains supreme.

But we are equally certain that, in a vast number of homes, parents have delegated all responsibility for moral and religious training to the church in its various departments. Indeed, the problem often is how to counteract the immoral and irreligious atmosphere of the home environment during the week by the atmosphere and the teaching of the church at work on Sunday with the children.

It is to attempt some constructive training of the children under the two limitations just mentioned that pastors and lay workers are now called.

The first attempt to meet the problem should be made in the Sunday school or in the society for young people. There ought to be a definite place in the work of the Sunday school for systematic training in Christian doctrine. No more satisfactory results were ever reached in the Sunday school than were gained when Scripture passages and the answers to the Catechism formed the back-bone of the Sunday school instruction. Methods and helps and responsive exercises will never take the place of that rigid ancient spine.

A beginning may be made in the primary department, for which the first grade of a catechism is necessary. This must be in simple language, and must include the fundamental religious conceptions and experiences of child life. It is the most difficult grade to prepare, but twenty-five questions are enough for the work of a year. The use of the Cat-

echism ought to be varied by Scripture and hymns committed to memory. A great deal depends upon the teachers in this grade. But the superintendent and pastor are given an excellent opportunity to keep in touch with the children as they test them perhaps once a fortnight in the work. This serves as a spur to the activity and interest of the little people and has an excellent reactionary effect upon the officers.

In case the primary department is very small, this work of religious instruction may be accomplished in the Junior Society or League. The same Catechism may be used and the opportunity afforded the pastor is often better, inasmuch as he generally has a class to keep him busy during the session of the Sunday school, while the children meet quite generally on a week-day afternoon.

But the young people of the church from seven to fifteen years of age remain to form a second grade which must be reached in the same manner. For them a section in the Catechism is also necessary. It should be longer and somewhat more ambitious than the primary section just described. The view point from which it is written must be vital and experiential. It is the period when the young people are entering into life and life must be the dominant note in the teaching of this period.

If instruction is attempted through the Sunday school, the first step is to interest the teachers. A

great deal depends upon how the teacher presents the Catechism to a class. If he shows that he is not interested, or carries the idea that he is undertaking the new line of work simply because it is a new notion of the superintendent or pastor, the enterprise receives its death blow at the beginning. If the teacher conveys the idea that the task called for is a hard or unreasonable one, the effort will be futile. But an interested teacher will evoke an interested class. Having interested the teachers, the officers of the school may assign the work. The exercise of questioning may be varied in many ways, by desk work, by class questioning class, and by concert responses from the school. Even a Catechism may come to be an object of enthusiasm in a Sunday school.

Or it is possible to work with a Catechism through the society of young people. It is difficult. But if the material is at hand and five minutes at each meeting is reserved for a real "quiz" by the pastor, it is possible to accomplish a great deal of definite instructional work through this avenue.

But a third grade remains. It is composed of the young people above the high school age. These are the most promising candidates for church membership and are to be the workers of the future. For them a third grade of instruction is necessary. The view point here must be doctrinal. There is no demand for abstruse statements or for technical terms

of systematic theology. But we may as well be sure at the outset that thinking young people are bound to have a theology of their own and the church owes it to them that she furnish a simple, reasonable and winsome statement of the great doctrines of the Christian religion. Young people of high school age think more than we give them credit for doing, and they will respond to a system of instruction in the church that appeals to their sense of genuineness and scholarship as much as does the curriculum of their public school work.

For this sort of instructional work the Sunday school is eminently adapted. The fact that the school often meets in one room need afford no barrier to the effective use of a Catechism containing even three grades. If an A and B and often a C division is possible in one room in the public schools, three divisions in the Sunday school is not at all impossible. And whatever has been said of the general method in the grammar division applies equally in this third grade of work.

It is in this third grade, however, that the pastor's training class finds its place. This is becoming a necessity of every pastorate as it is the joy of every pastor. With reverence we would say that a pastor ought to seek to be to a group of young people in his church what Jesus was in the School of the Twelve. The great glory of his toil will often lie just here. The class may meet after school hours

during the winter months either in the church vestry or in the pastor's study. The latter place seems most desirable. It brings the pastor closely in touch with his young people and they see the place where the pastor toils. Many a book will catch the eye of some eager boy or girl, and many a new ambition will be born in the cheerful pastor's study. He can use the third grade of the catechism, but supplement the questions. One very desirable method is to amplify the answers by the material bearing upon them, which can be duplicated on a hektograph or mimeograph and given in advance to the members of the class. This takes time. But the young people will respond to calls for service in copying and distributing material. It takes time but it is a most rewarding work. In thus discussing three grades of instructional work we have spoken of a graded catechism. This raises the important question of a hand book of religious instruction, which is just now far more of a desideratum than a treatise on systematic theology. There are many catechisms published. But at present it seems more desirable for each pastor to prepare his own book. It is something that requires time and skill. But the result will be most satisfactory. From the homes of the parish, from the experience of the teachers, and from his own study he can gather his material. This must be graded, worked over, and finally put into permanent form. If the cost of printing is too large, the many cheap

reduplicated processes make it possible to get the pastor's catechism before the children.

In the effort to be as practically helpful as possible within the limits of a brief paper, we will hasten at once in conclusion to notice four qualifications for successful teaching in the graded course outlined above.

The first is genuine respect for the religious nature and experience of childhood. We hold the opinion too much that a child's religion is a very slight thing and that the problem of God is reserved for the philosophers and theologians. But the deepest questions concerning God and His ways with men come from the sincere reflection of the mind of a child. Boys and girls must not be patronized. Their religious life is just as deep and genuine relatively as is the experience of grown-ups. No teacher can help children in the formal work of religious instruction unless the problems of the little people are thoroughly respected and appreciated.

The second qualification is honesty. The questions of childhood are relentless and they carry us back to beginnings. We must be ready for the question, Did God make Himself? and ready to stand up honestly to the mystery when we are pushed back with the resistless How? of childhood. It is a crime to attempt to deal dishonestly with children in their questions. The child despises the teacher's intelligence when he dallies with an honest query

and gives evasive answers. We must admit that we do not know when we do not. It is cowardly for parents and teachers who are driven into a corner to take refuge in saying, "you must ask the minister." It is necessary to be honest.

The third qualification of the successful teacher in the work just outlined is clearness. Religious truth must be plainly put. There is a tendency to always put our expression of religious experience into "the language of Zion." But children ask with pitiless earnestness, "What does it mean?" They have a right to an answer in terms of their common life. There is such a thing as commonplaceness robbing a phrase of all its meaning. We sometimes wish that we might suddenly come upon the twenty-third psalm for the first time and read the wonderful words with all the freshness of discovery about them. We need occasionally a startling paraphrase or a new interpretation which will throw new light upon the old truths. We must talk the language of the new century in our teaching.

The fourth essential is discrimination. The burning question before us just now is concerned with how much of the Bible shall be taught or how the whole Bible shall be taught. There is a wise silence as well as a right word. And there is a certain downright honesty in discrimination which we need sadly in our teaching. The one fact remains clear, we have enough of which we are sure, and the things

in doubt are not the essentials. If any teacher has trouble with the Old Testament miracles or is puzzled over the Apocalypse, these are minor matters. The great verities of the Gospel of Christ are tangible and sure.

We have put these as four qualifications for the teacher. But they are really the four working principles by which the pastor must be guided in the preparation of his catechism. Sympathy, honesty clearness and discrimination are the four rules by which he is to work.

And finally, let it be noted carefully that no one case can be made a standard by which others are to be judged. This paper grows out of the experience of one pastor. The methods adopted by another may be wholly different. Indeed, in another place the same pastor might be obliged to use a method quite the reverse of this. Methods are nothing. The result aimed at is everything,—to bring the children of the church to Christ and to build them up in the faith.

CHAPTER V.

Men's Sunday Evening Club.

The Men's Sunday Evening Club is the product of an awakened consciousness of the true mission of the Church of Christ. Slowly the rising light of truth has dispelled that crude medieval conception of the Christian Church as an *Anno Domini* Ark, planned and purposed after its ancient prototype, to safely bear an imprisoned and complacent company of the righteous over the angry floods that engulf a race of sin-cursed and drowning men. A return to Christ and his teaching has brought prominently into view the Gospel theory of a heavenly kingdom as the salt and leaven necessary to make wholesome a disease-inflicted and sordid world. The world then becomes the object of Redemption, not a select company of saints. No religion after the spirit of monastic piety caricatured by Hall Caine as a "Cage in that Salvation Zoo" can meet the Saviour's ideal. The two words, serve and save, articulate the sentiment of the dawning era.

This expansive impulse that is now throbbing in the heart of the church has raised her vision to vast neglected and uncultivated fields where seldom treads

the feet of him who soweth the seed of "Glad Tidings" and reapeth its golden harvests. A careful investigation of the territory to be occupied reveals an area teeming with a Shepherdless masculine humanity. It would seem that great companies of men, many of whom possess Christian wives and children, had pitched their tents in the suburbs of the Holy City. In many of our smaller churches anxious pastors, like Diogenes of old, are engaged in a disheartening search for men.

The direst need of institutional Christianity at this very hour, apart from the dynamic of an incarnated divinity, is the influence and virility of an active male membership. In the Congregational Church of the United States, and we are no more destitute in this respect than our sister denominations, two-thirds of our membership is composed of women. In the state of Michigan at the present time the ratio of men to women is 32 to 68. But the most alarming fact of the situation is that year by year it is growing worse. A century and a half ago, according to printed statistics published in a *Congregationalist* of recent date, 42 per cent of men comprised the membership of our church. This decrease would not seem so astonishing if distributed over the 150 years, but the indications are that this falling off of the proportion of men has been largely within the past three or four decades. It was the recognition of this unchurched current of manhood flowing away

from the church that provoked the initiation of measures to alter this serious and ever increasing problem. This new impulse to project the influence of the church into an unregenerate society combined with an earnest desire to strengthen the arms of God with more masculine recruits, explain the rise and justify the existence of the Men's Sunday Evening Club.

The example of Jesus in gathering about Him a company of men trained as "Fishers of Men" to share the ever increasing demands of the new kingdom and to shoulder after His decease the aggressive campaign of a world-wide extension, is worthy of imitation on the part of modern leaders. The transcendancy of Jesus throughout the Gospel narrative has eclipsed the labors of His faithful disciples. How helpful that consecrated band of men who had forsaken all to serve their Master proved to be in the execution of the Lord's designs, we shall never know. However, the inspired records have not passed them by in ungrateful silence. Luke's graphic picture of the energy and determination displayed by those four men who let down the Capernaum paralytic through the roof of Peter's crowded house, exemplifies in at least one instance, which, perhaps, is but one of many, the valuable assistance rendered by zealous men.

Now there is no natural reason in the constitution of men that makes them less responsive to the

claims of Christianity than the fairer members of the other sex. The true explanation of the fact that we have so many more women than men is, that the ministry and the church work more for and among women than men. Before me are three church manuals, favorably representing country, town and city work. The first has two church auxiliaries "The Ladies' Aid and the "Woman's Missionary Society," with no organization for men. The second has a "Young Men's Institute" against three distinctively women's societies. The third possesses a "Boy's Brigade," "Young Men's League," and "Men's Association," with eight societies exclusively for women.

Thoughtful men have likewise attributed their indifference to church matters to the fact that the ministry "visit more with women than with men, and don't know how to reach men." Now our example in efforts to reach men is the Son of Man who dwelt in the companionship of men. And the ideal Sunday Evening Club is that old resolute Capernaum band that sought and brought men within the hearing of the Master's persuasive voice and the touch of his healing hand.

The object of the Men's Sunday Evening Club is well illustrated in the work of that club chosen as our ideal, whose sole interest was to bring men within reach of the Gospel. Our organization believes that if the great mass of habitual non-attendants can

be enticed over the threshold of a church door to enjoy her genial hospitality, the inspiration of her song, her sacred communion with God, her earnest and natural exposition of the life and teachings of Jesus, misunderstandings and prejudices will be removed; yea more, Christ's own word will be fulfilled, "If I be lifted up from the earth I will draw all men unto me." The Sunday Evening Service is regarded as an especially prepared gospel feast with a varied and attractive menu, and the different committees in divers ways heed the Lord's injunction to his servants of old, "Go out in the highways and hedges and compel them to come in that my house may be filled."

Any and all methods that conserve these two ends, compelling men to enter the Father's house and drawing men unto His Son should be fully used. The coercion utilized in filling the Father's house must be moral not physical. Occasions sometimes arise with us as with Christ when resort to force is expedient in driving some disturbing element out of the church, but neither whip nor tugs, though often quite serviceable in bringing people to the meeting-house door, can never be used effectively in forcing people within the church. There are, however, three kinds of legitimate compulsion.

First and perhaps best of all is that time honored and ever powerful practice of personal entreaty. We shall never discover a more effective means of

popularizing our Christian enterprises than the plan of Andrew who "first findeth his own brother and brought him to Jesus." This was also the method used by the heralds of the Great Supper who scattered themselves among the abodes of publicans and sinners urging their attendance at the prepared feast. A few men intensely interested in the Sunday Evening Service, visiting the homes of men—church-attendants, and inviting especially the fathers and sons of the families to their weekly service, are of inestimable value.

Another available means of compulsion for increasing the church attendance is the force of attraction. The service and surroundings should be made inviting. The time has passed when people can be drawn into a cold, barn-like structure, to sit for two hours over a fire-pan and listen to a grave discussion on "The Ontological Evidences of the Divine Existence." Our prayer meeting topic last night was "How to Make Religion Winsome." The motto adopted by the "Pleasant Sunday Afternoon" Association of England should characterize our Sunday evening service, "Brief, Bright, Brotherly." Such a service vibrating in sympathy with the major chords of the human heart will exert a silent but irresistible influence in attracting men to the sanctuary.

Advertising is no less fruitful in Sunday than in Monday business. A drug dealer in town recently told me that he had just received a lot of advertising

matter. I dare say hundreds of our churches never manifested zeal enough to scatter ten pounds of such matter during a whole century of professed activity in work for the Lord. Observance of the following precept :

“ Be harmless as doves
As serpents be wise ;
Preach the old Gospel
And ADVERTISE,”

is not the injudicious practice of a twentieth century fanatic. Cast abroad your announcements and they will not return unto you void.

Having gathered the audience there still remains the serious but sublime task of exalting Christ, perhaps before a curious and critical crowd of promiscuous and prejudiced men. A cheery and comfortable auditorium will reflect light upon the faces of an expectant people. Remembering that our purpose is not to entertain the head but to inspire the heart, every part of the service should accord with this end. Joyfulness and sincerity should radiate from the words and acts of all taking part in the exercises. The service of the ushers should be cordial and courteous. The music, both vocal and instrumental, ought to be hearty and heavenly. Let readiness and energy characterize the responses between leader, choir and people. The address, whether given by pastor or efficient layman, should be short, spirited and scriptural. Printed exercises, in the absence of

suitable and sufficient psalters and hymnals, are helpful in gathering together the whole service and encouraging the participation of the whole congregation. The following sample program will give some idea of the composition of a men's club service :

MEN'S SUNDAY EVENING CLUB.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, IMLAY CITY, MICH.

"Many men build as cathedrals were built, the part nearest the ground finished ; but that part which soars toward heaven, the turrets and the spires forever incomplete."

"Come thou with us and we will do thee good."

The pleasure and profit of this service will depend largely upon the heartiness with which each takes part. Let us do it as unto the Lord.

SUNDAY EVENING SERVICE.

FEBRUARY 19TH, 7.00 P. M.

Organ Prelude—Miss Palmer.

The call to worship—All rise with minster.

Minister—God is the Spirit ; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

People—As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.

Response (To the tune of Olivet)—All join.

Come, Holy Ghost in love, shed on us from above

Thine own bright ray ! Divinely good thou art :

Thy sacred gift impart, to gladden each sad heart

Oh, come to-day !

Come, light serene and still, our inmost sorrows fill

Dwell in each breast : we know no dawn but thine ;

Send forth thy beams divine, on our dark souls to shine

And make us blest.

Invocation prayer.

Hymn 177.

Responsive Reading. The keeping Psalm, 121.

Leader—I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

People—My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

L.—He will not suffer my foot to be moved ; he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

P.—Behold he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

L.—The Lord is thy keeper : the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.

P.—The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

L.—The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil, he shall preserve thy soul.

P.—The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

Followed by Gloria Patri.

Music—By choir.

Scripture selection, " Shifting Responsibilities.

Hymn, 282.

Pastoral prayer.

Offering, " Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him.

~~As~~ These offerings are devoted to work of Men's Club.

Notices.

Music.

Address, " Why Men Neglect the Church."

The Final Reasons.—By Pastor.

Closing Service—Minister and people in unison.

The Lord is my shepherd ; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures ; he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul : he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil : for thou art with me ; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies : thou anointest my head with oil ; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life : and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Hymn, 334.

Benediction.

Organ Postlude—Miss Palmer.

NOTE—We urge all men, young or old, in sympathy with the work of this club to hand their names to the membership committee. Help on the good work.

THE MEN'S CLUB

believes "a little work from many" better than "much from a few," and urges the co-operation of all men who have not other church relations and duties.

OUR OBJECT.

We desire to make the church more helpful to men through a "Bright, Brief and Brotherly" Sunday Evening Service.

H. N. DASCOMB, PASTOR.

OFFICERS.

M. BOWEN—President.

J. W. WATHERSTONE—Vice-President.

A. B. EBNER—Secretary.

J. M. SHEPPARD—Treasurer.

COMMITTEE.

WORSHIP—N. W. Stock, C. H. Naylor.

MUSIC—W. J. Abbs, T. F. Holden.

PRINTING—J. W. Watherstone, S. E. Thorpe.

MEMBERSHIP—E. E. Palmer, J. M. Sheppard.

USHERS—Robert Walker, Jr., L. O. Snelling.

ENTERTAINMENT—F. Rathsburg, H. G. Thurston,
F. Moorland, A. B. Ebner, W. J. Abbs.

The organization of a club may be perfected in one of two ways. You may invite the gentlemen of your congregation to meet you either at a supper or for the evening, and then discuss the matter pro and con and if it seems advisable, organize. Or the pastor may preach on a Sunday evening on some such subject as this, "The Claims of the Church Upon Men," in which he may state his own and the church's desire to gain the interest of the non-church going men in the community. At the close of the service ask those interested in the formation of an advanced movement in behalf of their fellow-men to remain. Then organize and appoint committees to begin work for the next Sunday evening service. Allow me to suggest, after the careful examination of several of the best constitutions in use, the following outline which has been patterned closely after the constitution of "The Men's League" of the First Presbyterian Church of Sterling, Illinois, and the model constitution printed in "Modern Methods in Church Work," by Rev. G. W. Mead :

CONSTITUTION.

Article 1. Name—The name of this association shall be "The Men's Sunday Evening Club" of the church.

Article 2. Object—The object of this club shall be to arouse the men of the community to attend and to join in the practical Christian work of the church by increasing the attendance, attractiveness and effectiveness of the Sunday Evening Service.

Article 3. Membership—All men in sympathy with the work of this club and willing to aid in the extension of its purpose, may become members by application to the membership committee. It is expected that all members shall attend the services of the club and when called upon serve upon the committees.

Article 4. Officers—The officers of this club shall be a president, secretary and treasurer, who shall hold their office for three months or until their successors are appointed.

Article 5. Committees—The pastor of the church and the officers of the club shall constitute an executive committee, whose duty it shall be to exercise a general supervision of the club and to appoint the following committees, each of which shall serve for one month unless otherwise notified.

2. A Committee on Worship—Who with the pastor shall plan the program for each evening service.

3. A Committee on Music—Who with the chorister shall provide the Evening Service with appropriate vocal and instrumental music.

4. A Committee on Printing.—Who shall see that the Evening Service is sufficiently advertised and supplied with programs.

5. A Committee on Ushers—Who shall perform the accustomed duties of such office.

6. A Committee on Membership and Invitation—Whose duty it shall be to secure new members, to visit and invite strangers and non-church attendants and extend the hospitality of the church to all who come.

7. A Finance Committee of which the treasurer shall be chairman—Whose duty it shall be to provide funds necessary for carrying on the work.

8. A Social and Entertainment Committee—The business of which shall be to plan for the social interests of the club and arrange for any public entertainments or lectures that may seem desirable.

Other Committees may be added where clubs desire a wider range of activity.

Article 6. Meetings—The regular devotional meetings of the club shall be held every Sabbath evening from October to June inclusive. A business meeting of the executive committee shall be held on the Friday evening previous to the last Sunday of each month, when the new committee for the suc-

ceeding month shall be appointed and all other necessary business be transacted.

Article 7. Amendments—This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of those present at any regular meeting.

The Men's Sunday Evening Club is helpful in many ways. It lifts that troublesome burden known among pastors as the "Sunday Evening Problem," by enlisting in its interest the eager effort of a score or more men, it divides the responsibility for the service. Its motto reads "A little work from many is better than much from a few." Thus the men feel that the service is theirs and work with a personal interest. It secures a large and regular Sunday evening attendance, and the very presence of a good audience increases its effectiveness; for "grace no more than nature will endure a vacuum." It brings outsiders inside of the church and often converts confirmed stay-at-homes into regular attendants upon the other church services. And if the pastor be faithful in preaching "The Word" he may rest assured that "it shall accomplish that which I please and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it."

It gathers about the pastor and brings him into contact and intimate association with a company of men united in a common interest. The friendships formed through the consultation with the members of the various committees, naturally widen and strengthen the minister's influence in the community.

In fact, the Men's Sunday Evening Service is a most important factor in stimulating the church to the conscientious discharge of the Master's commission to project the redemptive agencies of the Gospel into the "highways and hedges" of human society.

Allow me in closing this article to append a few suggestions prompted by personal experience and the testimonies of others who have made the venture.

The flexibility of the Men's Sunday Evening Club assures utility for the smaller as well as the larger and more resourceful churches. One field may not possess the talent of another to enrich a popular evening service with solos and orchestral accomplishments, or to bring to the aid of the pastor a company of business and professional laymen gifted with public address, all of which if rightly used, contributes valuable assistance. A small church may not have access to means that will allow the support of lecture courses or the extension of its work in good citizenship, philanthropic and charity efforts; yet the smallest communities will respond to the church's earnest endeavor to increase the attendance and helpfulness of its Evening Service. A pastor from a little Illinois village of less than 300 inhabitants, has given in "Modern Methods of Church Work" this testimony: "I have proven most conclusively that the methods of the Men's Sunday Evening Club can be utilized successfully in the

country church. Our church is crowded at every Sunday evening service, and often chairs are placed in the aisles, all available standing room is occupied. During the warmest weather last summer we turned people away by scores who were not able to gain admittance, and this matter of attendance is only one indication of an increased interest manifested in every line of church work. It has far surpassed my most sanguine expectations."

The club, while it may relieve the pastor of some anxiety regarding the evening service, does not lessen his labours. The direction and supervision of volunteer help require more time and thought than the old routine service, the sameness and regularity of which like the oft heard and unheeded alarm clock, fails to arouse its drowsy auditors. The sermon must be short and restful ; yes, but those sermons that never tire the people always tire the preacher. If this modern device of the church, as some laymen seem to think was planned as an effort to provide parsonages with pillows, it is an absolute failure, for it requires hard work and constant study.

Many clubs make an annual assessment per member to meet their current expenses. We were relieved of any thought of financial matters by taking up a voluntary offering at each service. This proved sufficient with the proceeds of a banquet given at the close of the winter's work, to pay for the weekly programs, secure special music for the choir, assist our

state in her Sunday school work, to make some needed repairs in lighting the church, and apply \$20 to the cancellation of an old church debt.

In some clubs regularly, and others occasionally, the pastor profitably occupies a few moments in a "Sermon Prelude" or "Current Events," devoted to the inspiration of Christian patriotism in the treatment of some local or national questions. These discussions, however, should never become a conspicuous character of the service, but if they attract some who otherwise would not attend and thus afford an opportunity to sow the Gospel seed among seemingly rocky and impenetrable soil, the means is not unworthy of the end.

A horse bounding over the roadway under full control of its driver, may perform an inestimable service by helping a slowly moving pedestrian along an arduous journey, but when the reins no longer hold in restraint, and the unruly animal, leaving the beaten roadway, plunges madly along a self-chosen course, horse, carriage and occupants are all involved in imminent danger. In the Men's Sunday Evening Club, modern enterprise has harnessed to an ecclesiastical vehicle a youthful but promising colt, which if kept under control by wise pastoral direction and within the bounds of its legitimate sphere, adds rapidity and delight to the slow jogging movement of the ordinary country church. But once let the fiery steed become unmanageable, and it is indeed "a vain thing for safety."

CHAPTER VI.

The Church Paper.

One of the greatest aids to the advancement of knowledge was the invention of printing. Following this was the improvement in the way of cheap paper, and the reduction in the expense of producing whatever is worth preserving in printed form. The press has become the agent of every enterprise and who will say that it is not doing its work in a creditable manner? For a long time the larger churches have called the printing press to their aid in the work of the parish and community with a good degree of success. Now and then a country pastor has ventured to do something in this line, but as a rule, these ventures have been short lived and unsatisfactory. There is, however, a place for a paper in the country church, if rightly managed and made of constant and growing interest to the parish. This opinion being held by the writer for several years, there was a looking forward to a time, when something of the kind could be undertaken. Allow me to give you a little of my experience in the line of publishing a church paper. My church has about one hundred and twenty-five members, in a village and commu-

nity of from fifteen hundred to two thousand people. There is one other Protestant church in the village. Some years ago a pastor endeavored to establish a paper, which failed to live a year. There was no enthusiasm among the people to begin with. In fact, I think they questioned the wisdom of the undertaking. The Endeavor Society was induced to aid the present enterprise to the extent of fifteen dollars, for the first year. The pastor was editor, with an assistant, and a publishing committee from the Endeavor Society. We published a four-page paper, with three columns, ten inches in length to the page. We made our plans to sell two columns of space for advertising, at a price that would make it an object for business men to patronize the paper. Our first number, on the front of which was a full page cut of the church, was somewhat of an experiment. Although some mistakes were made, which later we tried to correct, it was well received. The criticisms were friendly and encouraging ; many of them being helpful in the way of making the paper accomplish the work for which it was designed.

Not wishing to have it appear that it was for free distribution, a subscription price of twenty-five cents was asked ; but the paper was intended from the first to reach every family in the parish. No soliciting was done, and yet our subscription list was as large as could be expected. After two or three months the enterprise passed beyond the experimental stage. The

finances for the year became secure, and the contributions to its columns were very generous.

The pastor felt some misgiving about urging the paper upon the people the second year, and waited for some sign from the church and community as to their wishes in the matter. The first month nearly passed without any issue, then responses began to come in, and the question was repeatedly asked, "where is our paper?" It was plainly the desire of the people that it should be continued. So it entered upon another year of usefulness, with the pastor as editor; a lady assistant to edit the Endeavor column; and a publishing committee from the church, instead of from the Endeavor Society as before; the editor assuming the financial responsibility.

It has now reached the last half of its second year, being run substantially on the same plan as in the first, except that the issue is published near the close of the month, instead of at the beginning; and all notices, topics, etc., are for the following month. This plan was found to have some advantages over the other. It is a welcome visitor in the homes of our people, also to the friends of the church residing elsewhere, and in the opinion of the writer is doing good work.

There are many things to be considered in starting a church paper; the first and perhaps most important, being the item of expense. Several months ago, I received a letter of inquiry from the pastor of a large

church, asking how such an enterprise as ours could be made to pay for itself; adding that he had often contemplated something of the kind, but had been hindered by the financial problem. There are two ways in which this can be managed. One is to negotiate with a printer to take the editorial matter and supply the church with the requisite number of papers, giving him a certain amount of space, and allowing him to secure his own advertisers at his own terms, taking the proceeds thereof for his pay. This plan has its advantages, and I have known of its being adopted to the satisfaction of all parties.

The other method is to make terms with a printer to supply the number of copies desired for distribution; the editor or manager securing his own advertising, which should pay for from one-half to the whole of the office work. A little experience will give him tact in dealing with business men, so that the patronage will be all that is necessary. There are also in every parish those who will donate a small sum to the work. Then the subscriptions will amount to from a quarter to one-half of the cost. Personally, I prefer the latter method, as it enables the editor to control the advertising, thus preventing anything objectionable. If it is carried out with tact and wisdom, the paper will meet expenses, which is all that is expected or desired. One should make ample provision for one year before beginning. It would be impossible to give an estimate of the cost of such a paper, because the

prices for work differ. The size and quality of the paper, and other things, would also vary the expense.

Having disposed of the financial question, the next thing to be considered is the editorial work, which of course must be gratuitous. The pastor should have this in his own charge. Others may and should be associated with him, but his hand must be on the lever constantly. It is well to assign certain parts to individuals, permitting them to work them up in their own way. For example: give some bright Endeavorer a column and let him edit it as he pleases, subject to the approval of the pastor and the publishing committee. Give some one else a column to be devoted to missionary news, the items to be edited so as not to have the appearance of clippings. Let another catch the brightest gems of thought that fall from the pastor's lips on Sunday morning, and prepare them in an attractive manner. This should be in the hands of some one who can confer with the pastor, and if possible have access to his sermon notes.

There regularly comes to my hands a paper from a church in another State where this work is done in quite an ideal way. It is a feature that has not yet been introduced into my own paper, as I have failed to find the right person who will undertake it. The literary ability, which he can command, suitable to the work of his paper, will often be a surprise to a country pastor. Every church and community has men and women who have talent in this direction and can

use it creditably. There are also friends of the church, former pastors and young people, who have grown up in the church and gone to other places, who will gladly respond to invitations to speak a word of encouragement through the columns of the paper. There are others of a historical turn of mind, who will prepare articles of educational value to the reader. Some bright person goes on a visit, and while away has opportunity to visit some prominent church, or study some phase of religious work. A description of their travels would be very readable. Open letters, written by friends living away, have been found helpful. Short stories, written for the paper, are also interesting, but for me rather difficult to secure.

Editorially the paper must discuss the problems of the church in a clear and concise manner, taking great care to present only the hopeful side. The editorial column is no place to disclose discouragements. If a pastor should try to be cheerful when he calls upon his people, much more should he have a cheerful strain in preparing for them his monthly message.

One thing I would insist upon : make as few clippings as possible, and let those be chosen with the greatest care, for a paper has to do with local church life. If it is made up of clippings it will be thrown aside with disgust, while an article from a friend of the church will be read with much pleasure.

Every issue should have a leading article on the first page. It is well to announce that such will ap-

pear and have the readers on the lookout for it. Never allow the paper to get into a rut. Have enough of variety to keep up the interest, and if possible, increase it as the months go by. To this let me add : do not permit your paper to be ruined by cranks. Never be afraid to exercise a censorship and prevent the appearance of unworthy or irrelevant matter.

The financial and editorial question being disposed of, the next thing is the circulation. The paper must be made to reach every home if possible. There may be some who will oppose the movement and will refuse to receive it ; others may be unwilling to pay for it. The subscription price must be very low, and yet it is better to have one for people prize more highly that which costs them something. My experience has been, that oftentimes if the paper is sent for a while an interest will be awakened, and in the end produce a subscriber. The pastor should have for his own use a list of those who should receive the paper gratuitously. All absent members and friends of the church should be on the subscription list, which should also contain former and neighboring pastors. The circulation must necessarily be limited, but should be as large as possible. In order to accomplish this, the paper must be made a necessity to the people by meeting a local need. The constant objection made to the smaller paper is that the large paper is so cheap that there is no object in maintaining the small one ; but if every number has a local interest, or contains articles from

friends of the people, it will be as readily received and as eagerly read as the larger paper. Occasionally a cut of a former pastor, or a prominent neighboring pastor will cause a demand for the paper, and extra copies will be called for, which will help to create friends for it.

Good editorial work will keep the enterprise going, once it is undertaken, and poor work in that line will kill it. No church paper can be made a success without careful attention to these three lines, financial, editorial, and circulation.

Let us notice some of the uses it may serve in the work of the church ; the first of which will be that of a parish visitor. The pastor can visit his entire people not oftener than twice a year. Special occasions may call him into some families several times, but he will not make a complete canvass of the parish more frequently than has been stated. However the church paper comes every month, bringing a greeting from the pastor, as well as news of the church, which are very acceptable to any who are unable to be out constantly. To some extent, it will serve the purpose of a call ; and when the pastor does call, there will often be a pleasant reference to the regular monthly visitor. In this way, one will supplement the other, making the pastor in his parish duties more effective. There are some things, which he wants brought before the people, in such a way that all will consider them at the same time. Wish-

ing to make a personal appeal, he addresses it to each member of the flock through the editorial column. One will be surprised, at times, at the result, and the response which will be called out. The pastoral call should bring to those who are shut in, the interesting features of the church life, as well as what is being undertaken for the uplifting of humanity. This the paper can do, month by month, during the whole year; thus establishing a bond of sympathy and fellowship between those who attend church, and those who would gladly do so but cannot. It is constantly presenting the hopeful side of things, and keeping before the people the fact that something is being done in the way of progress. Every church is inclined to dwell on the dark side of things, and magnify their failures. The other side must be forcibly presented for the encouragement of the members. Every church has occasional attendants, who know very little of its real efforts and successes, and who wonder if it is really doing any good in the community. The church paper will give them light, if it is put into their hands.

Aside from the aid in the direction mentioned, it can be made a help to the pulpit work, which has already been referred to under the head of editorial work. Space would hardly allow the printing of entire sermons, at any time. Extracts, however, may be used every month if desired, and might have the effect of increasing the attendance; even if that re-

sult did not follow, the interest it would have for some who would be unable to be present at the services would make it an object to publish them. Much good might also be done by fixing in the minds of the congregation the leading thoughts of the sermon.

Another use is to promote fellowship among the churches. It is well to devote a little space nearly every month to items from other parishes in the county. I have found it a good plan to devote some one number to a neighboring church, writing up their Endeavor Society, their Sunday School, their church, and a sketch of the pastor. Those numbers of the paper will be eagerly sought after, giving an added interest in the church to which the courtesy has been extended. If there is a newly organized church, which is, in a way, the offspring of the older churches, that is the one to help ; and the paper can be of great use to such a movement, at the same time quickening the interest of the home church in local missionary efforts. Every church ought to keep in touch with every other in the county, and know something of the movements of the different pastors. The members should know when and where the ministers' meetings are held, and what subjects are discussed. These are things that the pastor cannot tell his people from the pulpit ; he can, nevertheless, keep them informed through the columns of the paper. The result will be a deeper interest in the county work, and when the annual Conference comes around, they

will know something of what to expect, in the way of report, from their neighbors. Experience will discover many other uses, perhaps no less important, which this aid to the church can serve.

All that has been said, in favor of a church paper, indicates that a vast amount of work is necessary to insure its success. Whether the profit to the Kingdom of God would be greater in this line than for the same amount of energy expended in some other direction, each must decide for himself. One should never start a paper, in a small church, without making a thorough canvass of the situation, and satisfying himself that it is the right thing to do. Where the conditions are favorable, and the enterprise is rightly conducted, it cannot fail of accomplishing good results.

It is sincerely hoped, that these suggestions will not lead any pastor to make an unwise venture, but I am sure there are pastors in churches where the suggestions in this article can be carried out to great advantage. At all events they are worth considering. My advice to any one who is contemplating anything of the kind is, to look into the subject carefully, take account of the work, and the expense, and weigh them with the resources at hand ; then make a trial for one year. The experience one would acquire in that time would enable him to decide whether or not it would be advisable to continue.

CHAPTER VII.

The Home Department of the Sunday School.

There are in every church, members who for the time being, or permanently, are cut off from participation in its services. In some cases, they have been active workers in the church or Sunday school, but because of advanced age or illness, or care of the sick, or of young children, removal to a more distant part of the parish, or from some other cause, they are no longer seen in their accustomed places. If the church makes no definite effort to retain the active sympathy of such members, and keep them in touch with her life, they are in danger of coming to feel somewhat neglected and forgotten, and she is in danger of losing somewhat of her influence over them, and of their attachment to her. There are others within the limits of every parish, who attend church with more or less regularity, but who do not find it convenient, for various reasons, to stay to the Sunday school. Yet if they were invited to join a class for the study of the Sunday school lessons at their own homes, they would gladly do so.

There are still others who have always been non-churchgoers, and who are bringing up their families in the same way.

If friendly calls and invitations to attend the church and Sunday school do not succeed in bringing them out, some of the members of these families will generally agree to study the same lessons which the classes in Sunday school are studying, in their own homes, each week. They are the more ready to do so when shown the inexpensive Quarterlies, with their helpful comments, maps and illustrations, and the catalogue of the Sunday school library, whose books they will have the privilege of drawing.

It was to encourage and extend the habit of regular study of the Bible among the above mentioned classes and throughout the community, and to give them the advantage of the lesson helps which are taken by the school, and moreover to extend to them the hand of fellowship in their study, that the Home Department of the Sunday school was formed. It aims to send its visitors to all the families in the parish, whose members are not in the Sunday school, and to invite those who are able to join its classes, but those who for any reason cannot or do not do so, it seeks to enroll as members of the Home Department. The membership card which those who join are asked to sign, reads as follows.

I agree to join the Home Department of the
—— Sunday school, to spend at least half an hour

each Sunday, or during the week, in the study of the weekly lesson, unless unavoidably prevented, and to notify the superintendent of my withdrawal.

These cards, with whatever envelopes and blanks are needed, are to be obtained of the S. S. and Pub. Soc. at Boston.

The Home Department is considered a branch of the main school. Its members are invited to all its socials, picnics and entertainments, and are urged to come into the main school as often as they find it convenient. On special days, as at Easter and Christmas, they should always be remembered.

An envelope is sometimes left with them, that they can make such offerings as they choose to the objects for which the school contributes, but this is never emphasized.

The officers of the Home Department, when it is fully equipped, are a superintendent, usually a lady, and visitors, likewise usually ladies. Their number should depend upon the number of families to be visited, the extent of territory to be traversed and the amount of work each visitor is able or willing to undertake. A visitor may not have more than two or three in her class, or even one. Mr. Duncan in his instructions, says that few visitors can profitably care for more than twelve.

The Superintendent nominates the visitors, and gives them instructions. She also keeps records of the work of the Department, and makes quarterly and an-

nual reports to the main school, and also makes reports, or gives information to the members of the Home Department, both of its own work and the work of the school.

Each visitor makes calls upon the members of her class every quarter. This is necessary in order to receive their reports, and any offerings which they may make, both of which she transmits to the Superintendent, and also to furnish them with the lesson helps and report blanks for the next quarter.

Regularity in visitation or correspondence by letter if a call is impracticable, is essential to the success of the work.

The above is a bare outline of the method of work or the plan of the Home Department of Sunday school, but it is not difficult to perceive in it an efficient system both for developing good and active workers in the church itself, and through them of more thoroughly permeating the whole parish with its spirit, and the power of the Word.

Let the Superintendent and visitors be consecrated to the building up of Christ's kingdom, and let them be fully persuaded of the value of this department of work in advancing that kingdom in their locality ; let them study to know thoroughly the families in their field, and cultivate sympathy with each and every one, that they may readily come into touch with them, and thus gain their confidence and co-operation ; then these workers, as they go back and forth from the church

and Sunday school, to those who are denied or who deny themselves from participation in their full privileges, form a natural and effective circulatory system for conveying the vital warmth and strength from the very heart of the church to whomsoever will receive it.

The visitor desires to be the friend of those to whom she goes, not a missionary. She does not try to force confidence, but her sympathies are quickly responsive and she studies her opportunities. Sometimes it is to speak a word directly for the Master ; sometimes to emphasize the bond of connection between the church and each member of the Home Department ; sometimes to endeavor to remove false impressions or prejudices which are wont to spring up in the minds of those who consider themselves outsiders.

In most cases the attendance upon the main school and upon church is increased through the work of the Home Department, and the voluntary contributions of its members add to the fund for Sunday school benevolent work. Church membership is also increased through the addition of those who, if they had not been led by the invitation of the visitors to study regularly the Word of God, and had not been approached from time to time by a friend showing personal interest or sympathy, would have remained hidden in the seclusion of their own homes, and even if they had a Christian experience, would not have thought of presenting themselves for admission to a church.

What limited experience the writer of this paper has had as a worker in the Home Department, has been in a country church.

The chief, in fact the only difficulty to be surmounted in establishing and carrying on the work of the department, has been to find among the membership of the church enough women to fill its offices, who felt themselves able and willing to undertake the work. It has not been found difficult to induce people outside of our Sunday school to come into fellowship with it when invited to do so, by agreeing to the weekly study at home, of its current lessons.

I do not mean to say that all who are invited, accept or will promise any regular study, but the proportion who accept the invitation is so large that the work is full of encouragement.

Some have been glad to use the books in the library. In a good proportion of cases they have been very faithful in sending in their weekly offerings of money each quarter, with their report. They have been as faithful in the study of their lessons, if not more so, than the members of the main school.

Sometimes a mother who lives at a distance from the church and has no means of getting there, except perhaps occasionally, will take a Quarterly and on Sunday afternoons gather her children about her and study the lessons with them. When they do come to church they stay to Sunday school, and the lesson is not new to them.

Sometimes two families living in a remote district and near together, meet on Sunday afternoons, for united study, and seem to derive great profit and enjoyment.

Sometimes a husband and wife study the lesson together, and each one sends in the envelope the weekly offering.

Again, it is some aged person, man or woman, who has been for a long time confined to the home, and who looks forward to the visitor's coming as an hour of social cheer, and as the one link which binds him or her to the outside Christian world.

A fact which has strongly impressed me, as I have been on my rounds of visiting, is a certain isolation of the families who live in the homes of our hill-side parishes. Busy industry, when it is not hard and exhausting labor, is the rule. Leisure, unless enforced by idleness, is the very rare exception. The farm houses are of course somewhat remote from each other, and the labors of each house are so exacting and absorb so much of the thought and time and strength that matters of common or general interest, whether religious or educational, are apt to suffer, and the lower concerns of daily living, the labors of the farm and kitchen crowd out of sight, and as it would seem, too often out of mind, the higher interests of life. One thing that seems to be needed in the country parish is some well organized system of circulation for carrying the warm, life-giving current

of Christian fellowship and co-operation and sympathy from the very centre or the heart of the church to all those who would receive it, even to the limits of the parish.

Pastoral visitation can and does do much, but the pastor cannot, and no church ought to expect that he can alone, supply this need. Every church must have among its members those who, if they will only stir up the gift that is in them, are able to add much to the efficiency of the church as a power for good, both to its own membership and to all the community in which it is located, by taking up just this regular and systematic visitation which is provided for in the plan of the Home Department of the Sunday school.

In the faithful performance of this work they could not fail to add richness to their own life and to greatly increase their capacity to be of service in their own neighborhood and community, or wherever they may be called to dwell.



CHAPTER VIII.

Special Work for Boys.

PRELUDE.

“The boy is really a modern discovery, or more accurately speaking he is a re-discovery, for in old times the Greeks and Romans and Jews recognized the great importance of the boy, but then after a little he disappeared again, and only in recent times has been re-discovered. If I may adopt words well known to us all I might say that it was only after a long period of years that again we see ‘those angel faces smile’ which the world ‘loved long since and lost a while.’

At the Reformation, when so many other things were reviving, the boy made a slight show of reappearance. You remember how Luther took his hat off when he entered a school—a very good omen indeed, and Erasmus and Dean Colet did not grudge to spend their great powers upon the education of boys. The appreciation and love of boys that Dean Colet had appear in his request to the school-boys of St. Paul that they would lift up their little white hands to heaven for him who always prayed for them. I need not say that the white hands had no

reference to the normal condition of boys' hands, but to the fact that Dean Colet heartily believed in the innocence of boys, and that their prayers were heard.

But the real discoverer or re-discoverer of the boy is Dr. Arnold of Rugby. It was he who turned the attention of Europe to the boy, and made people everywhere understand that a man could spend his life, however great a man he may be, in no better way than upon the education and training of the boys. Has the boy any real capacity for religion? Is it not a vain thing to try to make a boy religious? Now happily this question has been answered by Our Lord, who did not reluctantly admit, as it were, that a boy might be religious, but who took a boy and set him before the best men of their time, his own disciples, and said, 'there is the normal type of religion, that is what you ought to be.' Now if we could only be satisfied to allow a boy to have a boyish religion, if we can be satisfied with not striving to fit our own coat of mail on a small child and to make a little man of a boy, to leave him a boy, then we will see that a boy can be as religious, and probably a great deal more so than grown up persons."

DR. MARCUS DODS, Edinburgh.

THE PASTOR AND THE BOY.

The village pastor makes a serious mistake if he reckons without the boys, or allows the boys to reckon

without him. The ringing words of Dr. Chas. E. Jefferson in the recent International Congregational Council (1899) give point to this proposition, as he demands an immediate revival of doctrinal instruction for the youth in our churches. "A catechism!" he cries, and it is a true constructive note, struck at the right time. But the boy needs a supplement. He needs not only instruction in the theory of religion, but something to capture his will and enthusiasm in its practice.

Happy that pastor who knows the boy heart by intuition. He is one in a hundred. The average clergyman is regarded by the boys with respect perhaps, often with trepidation, and once in a hundred times with confiding affection. But boys are the saving timbers of to-morrow's republic, or there will be no republic to-morrow, the sills and rafters of to-morrow's church, or there will be no church to-morrow. The real minister, therefore, even though with misgiving, will tackle the problem of preparing this young timber for its place. He will first remember that no man can be a good builder in social Christianity except he be an architect in prayer. He will then make up his mind to love the boy, queer little ideas of honor, egotism, hero-worship, frankness, mischief, bicycle, skates and all. Let the pastor be assured that he has an opportunity all his own, distinct from that of the parent or teacher, to mould the boys of his community. And for this work there

is no more superb tool than the Boys' Club, with military drill, as a part of its activity. A few great elements are needed to make the boy a man. Among these are Purity, Obedience, Co-operation and Force. I name purity first because it is growing scarce. Because the tract of ground over which the boy marches from his twelfth to his twenty-first year is so covered by the Mauser rifles of Satan that before the line of manhood is reached the large majority receive a soul's death wound. Follow an average Sunday-school class of a dozen boys for twenty years and see how many of them have any sympathy with religion at the end of that time. Note those who have started on the road of alcoholism, gambling or the unnamable worst, and see if more than half of the twelve are not soul-wounded. He who comes forth

"Integer vitæ, scelerisque purus"

may well say, with that brave fellow of the Blatch Watch Regiment at Modder River, as he staggered back with a scant half dozen survivors from the charge on the Boer trenches, "We're a' that's left."

If the boy can be brought through pure you can make a man of him, but if his heart is black before twenty-one what will the other elements of character profit him? Now I do not hesitate to prescribe as an assistant to the work of grace in the heart, military drill for the work of grace in the body. It is a strong aid for the tempted boy. Real drill makes

strong arms and legs, hard muscles, deep lungs, quick eyes and ears. It is easy for the drill-master to inspire a manly contempt for those vices which weaken the body, unstring the nerve and deaden the eye. A glad, clean body is the probable house of a pure soul.

The Boy's Club will work from the body to the soul, aiding the church as it works from the soul to the body. The military method acts like magic upon the disobedient boy, the whole town knows about him. He has begun to break over every parental restraint and is preparing to scale the higher fences of the law. But he finds for the first time in our cadet company that it is honorable to obey, and to obey instantly. While he is in the ranks he fairly breathes obedience, and there, if nowhere else he learns the lesson of respect for rightful authority. He is improved timber for the State, possibly for the church, and his spirit of disobedience can be turned into the priceless quality—Force. Spend much pains, Oh Pastor, on the disobedient boy. Such was Augustine, such was Moody. An important result of obedience is Co-operation. The bumptious boy needs especially to learn this. His possibilities are great but he needs trimming. If a country boy, he lives among the most independent class of men in the land. As far as the right to express one's opinion, to order one's time and to vote as one sees fit, are concerned, the farmer is less interfered with than any other

man. In the country each man does things in his own way. The bumptious boy, therefore, is apt to grow to manhood with a large idea of the sanctity of his own opinion, feelings and inclinations. He needs to learn how to work with others. He will get his best lesson in our cadet company. The very first thing is a modification of his walk. He keeps step with others. He doesn't even turn around unless the order, "About, *face!*" suggests to him that an entire organization, of which he is a subordinate part, is about to turn around. He has begun to learn a truth that will multiply his usefulness a hundred fold, i. e. that alone he is nothing, but working with others a very considerable power.

If Purity stands at the head of coveted virtues the place of emphasis at the end belongs to Force. That temper by which the mind makes the body utterly its tool. This is the great need of the passive boy, the boy who doesn't count. Enthusiasm, Fire, Decision! Oh to breathe these into him, to light the divine flame of the will until the boy glows and burns for action. There is no more sublime service to his Maker and his generation. The man who has this force will impart to his boys his own fire and enthusiasm in this organized effort for the noblest purpose in the world, the making of Christian Citizens, or better yet, of Citizen Christians.

The core of our method is personal influence. A Boy's Club is proposed simply because it enables a

Christian man to get close to the boy's heart and make it move, love and hate with his. There is no part of Boy's Club work which may not be used under certain conditions in a Sunday school class or a Junior Young People's organization. The test of the method, wherever used, is the amount of power it will carry from one life to others.

THE METHOD AT WORK.

Begin small. Christ's club did. There was no hurry. He took two and grappled them to himself. Andrew brings Simon. The next day Philip is attached. He brings Nathaniel. There is a world to be saved, but John and Andrew are called first. The pastor will secure the best results by first getting the confidence of a very few boys, say four, and those the best. After that the more doubtful material may be taken on, in small quantities, with good hope of converting it. Invite the first few to the house. Go fishing with them. Study them. Grip them. Then, some pleasant afternoon, on a large barn floor, put them through the setting up drill from your book of U. S. Army Tactics, which may be secured through any large book store. Obtain four cadet rifles with bayonets. These may be gotten through your local hardware dealer from any wholesale hardware firm which deals in fire arms. They will cost about \$4.50 each. If this expense is too much, an excellent imitation rifle can be obtained

for about one dollar from the Baptist Boy's Brigade Headquarters, New York City.

Having equipped the four boys with arms and campaign hats or the regulation drill cap with visor, teach them the beautiful, lithe movements of the bayonet exercise. As they begin to move together you are working up an *esprit de corps*. The boys are already becoming comrades. Get them tired and enthusiastic, then sit down and propose the club, with a definite aim—to build strong character and strong bodies.

When the messenger of Christ goes at this task he will do well to give full acknowledgment of his messengership. Loyalty to the great Person should be an atmosphere about the club from the start. The boys must become aware of Him through the man who leads them. Do not try to make them say much about it. Boys won't, that is if they are honest. Do not go to the other extreme of letting them say nothing at all. Either is a mistake. Just have a frank talk, some day, with each boy about his soul. Get him to pray with you. Give him a carefully picked passage of scripture to read often, and then let his Bible and his God do the work. But do not push him. Never, *never* crowd him to say what he does not mean.

We suppose now that the boys are ready to organize. It is well that some things should be in black and white. The pastor will of course make the club method a servant, not a master, and no set of sugges-

tions can be adapted to all places. But the following constitution will serve as a basis, to be enlarged or diminished as conditions indicate :

CONSTITUTION.

NAME.

The name of this club shall be

PURPOSE.

Its object shall be to build up its members in Christian manliness by promoting self-control, courtesy to others and reverence toward God.

MEMBERSHIP.

Applicants for membership must be from ten to sixteen years of age, and must go to some Sunday school.

All members are expected to sign the following agreement:

I promise to keep from the use of alcoholic liquor as a beverage and from all use of tobacco. I promise to discourage profane and indecent language.

BUSINESS MEETINGS.

The business meetings shall be held at the first session of every month, only members being present, except by special vote of the club.

OFFICERS.

The officers shall be a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and such military officers as a complete cadet company requires, the military officers being promoted in regular army order. The civil officers shall hold office for six months.

BY-LAWS.

ATTENDANCE.

Any member who shall be absent for three consecutive meetings, unless by some illness which confines him to the house, shall cease to be a member.

DUES.

The dues shall be five cents a week for each member, payable to the Treasurer at the first meeting in each month. The Treasurer shall at the close of each meeting read a list of those who have paid.

ELECTIONS.

All officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the club. New members shall be elected by a two-thirds vote. All elections shall be by ballot.

Signed. (Names of members.)

There should now be a definite plan of operation. Lay out a series of ten or twelve weekly meetings, to end on a certain date with an exhibition drill at some anniversary, picnic, or general gathering of the church where the boys can win for themselves public credit. Work toward that. The meetings may well open with prayer before going out for drill. Then make the drill a sharp, quick exercise. Give the commands with a snap. There is no chance like this to breathe life and fire into the boys. Give them a good variety; the setting up drill a few minutes, and then insist upon erectness. Follow with the facings and marching drill. When these are learned, they should have the manual

of arms. The bayonet exercise is capable of so many combinations in picturesque movement that it will prove a particularly attractive feature. Do not be apprehensive about fostering a fighting spirit in the club. It does not work that way.

During each drill have a rest and be ready with a ten minute talk on some practical line. Heroic Deeds by Ordinary People, The Religious Soldier : Cromwell, Gordon, Stonewall Jackson, O. O. Howard, The Truth about a Glass of Beer, Some Secrets hidden in a Pack of Cards. These and a score of other topics are suggested by the enthusiasms and temptations of boy life.

Anon it is a good notion to vary drills with a day's tramp, the climb of a neighboring mountain, a visit to the scene of some historic event if the region affords it. This gives a fine opportunity for personal influence. The Beatitudes and Parables first came into the world on the trips of the Galilee Club, as they tramped and rested and sailed with the divine comrade. Then soul flows into soul most easily. Do not forget to tramp.

There is one thing which will end the whole affair at any time and that is the betraying of an overbearing disposition. He who would use our method must be long-suffering. He must make broad his phylactery for the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. He must wear it as frontlets between his eyes—for the average thirteen-year-old is no cherub. But give the

largest possible faith and credit to the collective judgment of the boys, having it understood at the same time that the leader holds the deciding vote on all questions. Keep a firm hand moved by a loving arm, with a heart of prayer behind it, and when the exhibition drill comes the concrete results will be

1. A group of boys bound to their pastor in loving loyalty.

2. A noticeable erect bearing and alertness in each boy.

3. A genuine purpose for a clean life on the part of each.

4. A new understanding and confidence between every father and mother and the minister who has done this service.

5. A general respect among the business men of the community for the church as an institution of practical Christianity.

All of these results may not be reached in every case but with good judgment most of them will, and any one of them is well worth the effort.

But the military idea will not last always. Do not work it too hard. A capital variation is to take a few weeks for a boy's camp at a neighboring lake. It is not highly expensive, often cheaper than living the same length of time at home. The camp should enjoy family devotions in the morning, and the rest of the time the utmost irregularity consistent with piety. For a dozen boys there should be if possible one man to

each tent and at least one of these must be a powerful swimmer. Let the entire camp disport itself in the water every day until each boy has been taught to swim. Train them so to take care of themselves in the water that the entire party can safely be tipped over with clothes on, knowing that each can get to shore and if necessary aid some one else. If the physical director of a gymnasium can be induced to spend a few days with the boys he may do priceless service by teaching the lessons of first aid in case of drowning accidents. In these and many more ways a single season of a boy's camp can be made a helpful and happy memory for a lifetime.

As fall and winter approach the club may betake itself with great profit to the study of good citizenship. It is no small service when they are taught how to conduct an ordinary business meeting, to preside, keep order, keep record, vote, and then abide by the decision of the majority. Some country churches, in the conduct of annual business, are perilously near "at sea" with the simplest rules of order. Endless misunderstanding and hardening of heart arise from unintentional violation of fair play in business meetings. The boys should be familiarized with the town business and encouraged to attend town meeting. They should be taught the sacredness of the ballot. They will hear reliable reports of bribery and they can be taught that the man who buys his town office, his seat in the legislature, or in Congress, is a traitor to us all,

not fit for the society of honest men, much less to help make our laws. They can be taught the application of Christ's principles to the working of government, and the truth that our glorious Republic is the best country in the world because the spirit of its constitution is more Christian than that of the government of any other nation ; and this because it was founded and moulded by those men of rock, the Pilgrims, and that man of oak, Washington.

There can often be arranged a course of practical talks, by prominent and successful men of the town or vicinity. The following will prove an attractive group of topics. Elements of success in Law, Medicine, the Ministry, Business and Teaching ; closing with a talk on Choosing a Life Work.

Levy on the whole region for the best there is in it. Make the doctor, lawyer, town clerk, postmaster, school teacher, summer boarder, all who have wit or counsel, join hands with the pastor in this fine enterprise.

It may be that my brother in the ministry is unalterably opposed to war and everything which savors thereof. For myself, I feel that injustice and oppression are worse than war ; that God uses lightning as well as sunshine to clarify the moral air ; and for myself I wish to see some lightning in a boy. But there are diversities of gifts. Every man to his forte, if he but put forth his personal influence. One pastor is an enthusiastic botanist. He will take to the woods with his club.

Another is an expert wood carver, and uses his hobby right valiantly with a class for manual training. But above and beyond all method are Love, Purity, Obedience, Force, and a real worship of the Most Brave, the Most Loving, the Knight of Nazareth. To breathe these into their hearts is the supreme purpose of special work for boys.



CHAPTER IX.

Library and Reading-Room.

The promotion of intelligence and the diffusion of useful knowledge form an integral part of the work of the church. To this work it is called alike by its traditions and the character of its mission.

The striking feature about the Old Dispensation was its educational purpose. In the midst of the chosen people were the revealed laws of God, the prophets and other organs of oracular communication, religious ordinances and emblems, and a long series of miraculous acts which embodied great truths, all constituting an agency for the instruction of the people. In a large variety of ways the Old Testament emphasizes the truth "that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good." So prominent was the educational feature that the apostle Paul speaks of the dispensation as a schoolmaster. God educated the chosen people, and in doing so educated the future teachers of mankind.

What this did for the Jews is well stated by a recent writer on education. "What a singular spectacle is offered by that people, which, dispossessed of its own country for 1800 years, has been dispersed

among the nations without losing its identity, and has maintained its existence without a country, without a government and without a ruler, preserving with perennial energy its habits, its manners and its faith. Without losing sight of the extraordinary vitality of the Jewish people, it is just to attribute another part of it to the sound education, at once religious and national, which the ancient Hebrews transmitted by tradition to their descendants."

The same characteristic is most marked in the New Dispensation. Christ was preeminently a teacher. He is more often referred to in that capacity than in any other, and the larger portion of his time during his public ministry was occupied in teaching the people.

The great educational movements and institutions of Christendom have had a distinctively ecclesiastical origin. The church has not always been mindful of its duty in the matter of promoting popular intelligence, and it would not be difficult to point to instances in which it has favored popular ignorance, and exerted itself to withhold educational privileges from the masses. Nevertheless, the church as a whole has never quite ignored its educational mission.

The Reformed Churches have always been active in the work of promoting intelligence and diffusing knowledge among the people. To this end they have founded and supported educational institutions

on a most generous plan, and they have adopted other means in many ways equally effective. In the seventeenth century in England was organized the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, and this was followed later by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.

Nowhere do we find better illustrations of the church's interest in the things of the mind than in our own country. Knowledge we have always held in high esteem and ignorance we have looked upon as incompatible with the welfare of the individual and of the community. That knowledge is desirable not for the few but for all has been a fundamental tenet in our working creed. Hence schools of all grades and other means for the diffusion of knowledge have been most popular among us.

Only six years after the arrival of Winthrop and his company in Salem, and only sixteen years after the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, the Massachusetts legislature made a grant of \$2,000 for the establishment of Harvard College. And here is an historical circumstance which should appeal to the pride of every New Englander and every true American, because it is the first instance in all history in which "the people by their representatives ever gave their own money to found a place of education." The beginning was small but it was made in the right spirit, and contained the potency and promise of larger and better things. To-day knowl-

edge is more widely diffused among us than in any other country.

Another agency for the diffusion of knowledge is coming into increasing prominence, namely, the library. It is not a competitor or rival of the school, but a most valuable adjunct. The school teaches how to read, the library furnishes what to read. The school teaches how to acquire knowledge, the library provides the means for its acquisition by opening to us the storehouses of human learning and wisdom. The school does its work during the earlier portion of life, the library does its work continuously through life. There comes a time when formal education ends, but if the scholar is true to himself and has a grasp of the true meaning and real purpose of life the educational process will go right on, the library being an invaluable agency in the work.

Here is a choice opportunity for the church to do effective work for the promotion of intelligence in the community.

I. In the first place, it comes clearly within the province of the church to establish a library of its own if it chooses to do so and can command the necessary means. This is one of the ways in which it can render most beneficent and acceptable service to the community, a service which cannot fail to react most helpfully upon the interests of the church, commending it even to the skeptically inclined as an institution ani-

mated by the spirit of Him who "went about doing good."

This has been done by at least one church in the State. In 1891, when the Congregational Church at Ludlow was maturing plans for the erection of a new church edifice, provisions were made for a room for a public library. The only library privileges accessible to the people being those offered by a small circulating library owned by one of the citizens. The project commended itself to the people, and especially to one family who promptly furnished the means for finishing and furnishing the room, and the purchase of books, and who have given a generous sum annually to meet current expenses. Generous contributions of books have come from other sources, and the library has been steadily growing.

The books are selected by a committee of the church appointed to take charge of the library, and the selection is made on the same principle as for any well ordered public library. Care is taken to exclude all books of a sectarian character, and there is nothing in the character of the books in the least suggestive of any connection between the library and the Congregational Church. On the tables are found all the leading magazines and many illustrated papers.

The reading room is scarcely of less importance than the library; and has some manifest advantages as compared with the latter. It is much less costly, and indeed the support of a good reading room may

be said to be within the means of any community and even of every church. Papers and magazines of a high order are now obtainable at a phenomenally low price. For twenty-five dollars a year a room can be well supplied with current literature, and twice that sum would provide a supply adequate to the needs of a community of considerable size. Of course this is not the only item of expense, but the only one of sufficient amount to prove an obstacle in the way of establishing such a room. Another advantage is that a reading room would attract a class of persons to whom the advantages of library do not appeal, and this is a class, too, which most needs to be interested in instructive and wholesome reading matter.

The church can work for this in several ways. Through its preaching and Sunday school instruction, and by the personal influence and exertions of individual members it can help to interest the community in the matter. This instruction and agitation clearly comes within the scope of the church's mission, and can not be overlooked or slighted, for it is a work having for its object the enlightenment of the community. The church can also take the lead in contributing in a material way to the success of such an enterprise by donations not only of money but of magazines and papers.

It is not impracticable for a church to have a reading room of its own. Such an extension of the church's work has much to recommend it. The church

has, usually, a vestry or some other suitable room which can be utilized for the purposes of a reading room without interfering with other branches of church work, which removes one important item of expense. It is much easier to maintain good order in a room in a church than in one located in a business block, and those who have had experience in this line of work appreciate the advantage here suggested. It helps to bring the church in closer touch with the life of the community, and to emphasize the idea that the church of Christ is essentially a ministering church, whose ministrations are coextensive with the needs and welfare of humanity.

The library is the absolute property of the Church, and is also in every sense a free public library. No fee of any kind is charged, and the privileges of the library are open to every one without the least reference to Church affiliations. It is open three afternoons and two evenings in the week.

II. The Church, through its individual members, if not as a Church, should contribute to the growth and usefulness of existing libraries. Members of the Church should interest themselves in the condition of these institutions and be prepared to contribute to the extent of their ability to their growth, in the way of money, books and influence. It is a mistake to assume that it belongs only to rich people or to the town or State to help libraries. It is in the power of most people to do something, and mem-

bers of the Church should be especially mindful of this duty. It is a part of practical Christianity, that Christianity which seeks to bless the world here and now.

In the same way the Church can exert an immense influence in securing the exclusion of books of a doubtful character. These are liable to find their way into any library, and it is the business of the Church to exert itself in all possible ways to help in keeping out such books, and to secure the introduction of books that are morally wholesome, instructive and of literary merit. It is not meant, of course, that books intended for 'entertainment are to be excluded, but trashy books, books that ridicule what the world has considered sacred, books calculated to lower the moral tone of the reader, books which set forth low views of life, these have no rightful place in any library.

The importance of keeping out of libraries books of doubtful character, to say nothing of books downright bad, is emphasized by the fact that people—good people—will live on terms of intimacy with a clever but bad character in the pages of a novel who would be ashamed even to acknowledge acquaintance with him were he clothed in flesh and blood. The influence of such association, however, is most deleterious upon the character and life. If the history of many an unworthy, not to say demoralized and ruined life, were fully known it would be

found that contact with low characters in current fiction formed quite an appreciable factor in the production of the result. The Church is doing good service in the cause of pure morals, undefiled personal religion, and in the interests of all that is best in character and life when it stands openly and actively for what is clean and elevating in everything that enters our libraries.

III. In a community where there is no library the Church should interest itself in securing one. It may not be situated so that it can establish one of its own. The means may not be available. It can, however, do much towards communicating the impulse which may bring about the desired result. It can take the lead and gather together the scattered resources and develop the latent possibilities. In every community, probably, there are resources available for a worthy object wholly unsuspected until the attempt is made to accomplish that object. It is the business of the Church to make the discovery by undertaking the work.

IV. Renewed attention should be paid to the Sunday School library. It is a pity that this has been allowed to fall into comparative neglect. It has done good work and is capable of doing better work. The books in such libraries have been—but seldom justly—stigmatized as “goody-goody.” The proper inference to be drawn, assuming the truth of the charge, is that the quality of the books should

be improved, not that the library should cease to be a feature of the school.

It is an excellent supplement to a public library. Many public libraries are deficient, for example, in juvenile books. The Sunday School library can make a specialty of these. The public library from the nature of the case can give but little attention to books of devotion and religious instruction, and works of reference for the Sunday School teacher. These are simply suggestions, of the value of a well-selected Sunday School library.



CHAPTER X.

Evangelistic Work in Out-Districts.

The parish of every church includes all people within its reach not provided for by some other church. Therefore the parish of the country church generally embraces a wide territory. We are not speaking of frontier States but of older States. The parish often has a diameter of ten or twelve miles. The writer was for some years pastor of a parish larger than this. On different roads several families came from five to six miles ; and for years these were among the most regular attendants on public worship. Within this radius many families seldom or never attended church but looked for no other minister for funerals and weddings. And there were several neighborhoods still farther away for which no other church felt responsibility. This extensive parish with rather vaguely defined limits is scarcely an exception among the country churches of Vermont and of many other States.

How shall the church extend its influence to all the inhabitants of so wide a region,—how touch with Christian influence all for whom it is responsible ?

Seventy-five years ago it was the fashion to attend divine service on Sunday. All people of fair morality

expected to be present at public worship. It was hardly considered respectable to be absent except for illness. We do not try to analyze the motives of the old-time church-going. The people were not far from Puritan days and ideas. They had fewer diversions. Sunday was an opportunity. They called their church edifice the "meeting house." It was fitly named. There the people *met* more or less religiously and less or more socially. Times have changed. The Sunday newspaper makes a claim felt by many. There is a sermon on one page at which one may glance between the rounds of the prize fights. Then there are the creameries and the milk wagons and the bicycles. Possibly some are not so sure as formerly of any supreme authority in the Bible. Whatever the causes it is certain that a far smaller proportion of the people attend Sunday worship than sixty or seventy years ago. Many excellent people are habitually absent and have no trouble of conscience. We do not say there is less religion. There is more missionary zeal, more "applied Christianity." There is less reverence for the house of God and some think less reverence for God. What must the church do? Clearly if the people will not come to the Gospel, the Gospel must be carried to the people. The mission of the church is to save men and its highest responsibility is for those near its own door. If the church does not cultivate its own field, how can it cultivate fields far distant? If it does not love those in its own parish, how can it love those in pagan lands?

One means of reaching the people is by evangelistic services in out-lying districts. We use the term evangelistic services in a broad sense. They may take different forms and should often combine several forms. The most favorable place for this out-district work is the school-house. We do not forget that there are other valuable means of carrying the Gospel to the people who do not come to the church for it. There is the Home Department of the Sunday School, the visits of the district committees and the pastor's personal care. But evangelistic work in school houses is a hopeful agency. Often this work may include a Sunday school. When there are many children in the neighborhood this form of service should not be omitted, especially if there are two or three residents of the district available for teachers. But even when there is a Sunday School it will generally be found best to supplement it with a short Gospel service of song and prayer and sermon. This will attract some older persons to whom the Sunday school does not appeal. Generally at the close of the season, if not before, an effort should be made to harvest the fruits, to call out testimony and seal decision for Christ. One could relate several successful efforts of this kind. In one district for several reasons services were conducted part of the time with a Sunday school, with an attendance of from thirty to forty, nearly all of whom would have attended no other religious service and could have found none nearer than five or six miles. It is

believed permanent good was done. Some intemperate men were reformed and some irreligious ones won to Christ. At another time in an out-of-the-way neighborhood among the hills, services were held through the summer months. There was a Sunday school of three or four classes. The pastor concluded each meeting with a short sermon. At the end of the season expression was invited and all present but one declared for Christ. About twelve of these soon after joined some neighboring church and others have given proof of the sincerity of their confession. Not one of these people were accustomed to attend church. It often occurs that the church conducting these services receives little or no direct and apparent benefit. The people of the district may have no means of conveyance to the church services or the work may be mainly for the children. But the Master will gather the harvest.

Sometimes a series of Gospel meetings may be the wisest form for the work. Then if lay members can be found who are qualified to aid the pastor or to take the main responsibility, all the better. Besides the result of reaching many with the Gospel message who will not come after it, there is another benefit of great value. The district meeting is a means of grace to the church. It calls into use its latent talents. The timid church member, the young Christian Endeavorer, here find an easy way to begin public witness and aggressive work. The mission of

the church is to save souls, to win men to Christ and to build them up in Christlike character. There are many Christians who find it difficult to see their life amounts to much as an agency for advancing Christ's kingdom. The gentle influence of home piety, the helpful deeds of neighborly kindness, the steady support of their own church, these do not afford such a palpable evidence of usefulness as they need for their encouragement. But let them go to a neglected neighborhood and pray and speak; let them see some response and they will have new confidence and self-respect and strength.

Indeed it is good for all Christians if they can find some such outside, definite service. "The laborer must first be partaker of the fruits," but the partaker of the fruits should be a laborer. If you can keep a church at work you can keep a church growing. It is no small advantage that a church which thus undertakes to cultivate its own field will be brought into greater sympathy with its pastor and into greater harmony and brotherly love. It will have less inclination to censure and blame.

Co-operation tends to communion. We wish to notice one or two peculiar advantages of the district service. It often happens that the inhabitants of the distant neighborhood are not in sympathy with the church. One of the reasons that has kept them aloof is the suspicion that the church is "genteel" and exclusive. We are confident that many

make an excuse of this notion. Possibly they sometimes have some ground for their suspicion. Now when the church carries meetings to their very doors it is a proof of interest and sympathy which disarms prejudice and conciliates good will. Again this is their own school house and they in a sense entertain the church. They are hosts and are to extend hospitality and courtesy. They feel some responsibility and pride in sustaining the meetings. If they have excused themselves from church service on account of lack of conveyance or on the plea of not being able to dress suitably, these objections are removed as to the school house. And if there is in any soul an awakened interest or a dawning purpose, it is easier to give expression to this feeling here in this little informal meeting than amid the more stately surroundings and colder atmosphere of the church. One has known timid hearts to commit themselves here who would not have found courage to do it elsewhere. The evangelistic services of out-districts are the fountains that will keep streams of life sweet and full in the church. How far away from the church should these district meetings be carried? Carry them to the borders of the next parish. Hold them in that broken-down old church, in "little old school house," or in the farmer's cottage. How near may they be held to the church? If we hold them very near shall we not give the people a new excuse for absence from the sanctuary?

The answer is "No matter how near if the people do not attend any other church service. We have not brought them to church. Let the church go to them. They did not hear our church bell, though they were but half a mile off. Let us see if they will hear this grasp of our hands and this personal call. If the service is really evangelistic and evangelical, your church will not suffer. The people will follow you to your sanctuary. Some of them will be baptized next communion. The spiritual child knows its spiritual mother. The home church will be refreshed with this new blood. But of course the most destitute places are likely to be more distant.

How large a proportion of his strength should a pastor devote to out-district work? He may give too much. He may spread himself out too thin. I knew a young pastor who put much strength into such work and apparently with some blessing upon his labors. But after a time his senior deacon, a wise and large hearted Christian, who had worked with him in a distant school house, kindly cautioned him. He said, "If every soul in this back neighborhood is converted, the influential men in your congregation won't care a cent if you don't keep your pulpit up." There is a truth here. The pulpit is the pastor's throne. And yet the throne stands upon the good will of the people and of these common people. The sermon will be better if the pastor's heart is kept warm and his speech

kept plain by contact with all kinds of people in earnest work. The sermon may be stronger if less stately. If it has less smell of midnight oil, it may have the breath of the green fields.



CHAPTER XI.

Special Work for Girls.

There are very few country churches that give special attention to the young girls growing up in their midst. Great anxiety is felt for the boys, and some attempts are made to interest them in the work of the church and kingdom, but the girls are usually left to work out their own salvation. This fact may be accounted for in one or both of two ways. First, the belief obtains quite widely that girls are more susceptible to Christian influences than boys, and can therefore, with less danger be left to themselves. Or, it may be that our special interest in the boys is due to the fact that at the present time so much emphasis is placed upon "Good Citizenship," and we realize that the boy will soon become the man. Whatever the reason may be, the fact remains that altogether too little attention is given to the girls.

We make a great mistake in thus neglecting the girls. If it is important to realize that the boy is soon to become the man, it is of far more importance to realize that the girl is soon to become the mother, for good mothers are the best assurance of good sons.

" Behind every great man there is a good woman." It would hardly be possible to say too much, or emphasize too strongly, the importance of giving the young girls our first and best attention. It is not wise to trust too securely to their natural inclination to accept and follow the good. Girls have temptations as well as boys, perhaps not so many or so strong but just as real nevertheless, and they need every good influence that can be thrown around them. They are worthy to receive the best efforts of the church and Christian people. For their own sakes, and for the sake of future generations, we should make every sacrifice necessary to secure for them the best possible instruction and training in ways of purity, sobriety and high ideals.

There are temptations that are common to boys and girls alike ; but there are peculiarities in the girls' condition and training that require special attention. They are shielded by their position from many of the perils to which young men are exposed, but by the very peculiarity of their position and training they have certain influences that subject them to great peril.

One great danger to which country girls are exposed, is that of growing to womanhood without anything like an earnest view of life, with its tremendous significance, its serious responsibilities and its inevitable relation to the future. The undue importance given to what are called Accomplishments very naturally impresses the young lady with the feeling that the great

purpose of her existence is to excite admiration. I do not under-value Accomplishments, they are the indications of refinement and culture, but the faculties are given us for something higher than mere amusement or entertainment.

Another great evil to which the young girl of to-day is exposed is the over-indulgence in light reading, novels and fictitious stories. Even though these books are not in themselves immoral or bad, excessive indulgence in such reading dulls the affections and impairs the vigor of the mind.

There is still another influence to which the young girl is subject upon entering into society, which is unfavorable to the formation of a strong and healthy character, and that is the sort of estimation in which she is held. The style of conversation addressed to her is the language of compliment and flattery. A kind of deference is paid to her. Every young lady is entitled to, and should expect due deference paid her, especially by the opposite sex, but she should resist and scorn anything like flattery or undue compliment. One who courts such things will develop a style of character that is unreal and artificial.

There is a great difference between the education and training of the boy and the girl. The boy as soon as he arrives at a certain age is expected to choose a profession or direct his attention to some particular line of business, and he pursues his studies with reference to that particular vocation. But the girl, with

only here and there an exception, is trained for no special sphere of action. This in part accounts for the unwarranted prominence given to external accomplishments. The last few years however have seen great advancement made in the education and training of young ladies ; a generation ago teaching was almost the only lucrative employment for which the young girls were trained. To-day there is a place in almost every branch of industry in which they may successfully engage. If one has a liberal education her range of choice of a life's work is practically unlimited.

It is not my purpose here, however, to enumerate the various temptations to which young girls are subject, nor to warn them against the same. I have referred to two or three special temptations in order to arouse the interest of the reader to the great necessity of giving to the girls our serious attention, and not leaving them to themselves.

We can not take the girls under our direction too early, nor can we give them too much time and attention. Great wisdom, patience and zeal are required to direct their young minds and encourage them in the pursuit of high ideals. The aim and purpose of all our work with the girls is the formation of character. Whatever be our means or method, the end is always the same. There are many ways and means of interesting and helping the girls of our church. The special line along which we labor is of secondary importance. If we can interest the young

ladies in Bible study, a catechetical class, there's no better method known, it offers a very wide scope for inculcating truth and wisdom in all lines. We may find it advisable to attempt to reach the girls through a Reading Circle, or, Literary Society, or even a Sewing School. Again we might with propriety and helpfulness minister to their physical needs by means of the Gymnasium, or Girl's Brigade. Almost any method, if wisely directed, will give the coveted opportunity to influence and instruct them in wisdom's ways.

In the country parish where the girls are scattered, and it is with difficulty that one can get them together, even once a week, and where you have not all the conveniences for special work, it will be found best to organize a society, give it some appropriate name, and let time, talent and convenience direct and control the methods adopted. My own experience has been that a variety is a good thing, and that more can be accomplished in the end, i. e., more of character-building, by introducing a variety of work.

I. The first thing to be considered in the formation of a Girl's Club is the superintendent. I need not attempt a lengthy description of the peculiar qualities that a superintendent should possess. As a matter of course she must love the girls and the work, and the girls must love her. She should have time at her disposal, the more the better. Someone

who is or who has been a teacher. Often a mother with her maternal instincts is the right one for the place.

Never choose any one, whatever her natural endowments, who is not an active Christian worker. Maturity of wisdom and character are indispensable. One who cherishes high ideals, noble thoughts, and a pure mind, and has herself reached a high standard of attainment. The ideal superintendent is hard to find, yet almost every little church can furnish one or more available women who will be willing to undertake the work. Choose the best that can be found after prayerful investigation and consultation.

II. The second step to be taken is the choice of work. What will be most helpful and at the same time interesting? Often this will be determined at the very outset, even before anything else, the desire to accomplish a certain end, will suggest the organization. Some one will ask "Why can not we have a Girls Sewing School" or "I wish that we might start a Reading Club." And some one will come forward to take up the work of her own free will, there will be no planning but a simple and spontaneous coming together and going forward. Usually, however, much thought and planning will be necessary before the work moves on. The work may be decided upon and outlined by the one or more who have become interested in the girls, or the girls may be called together and consulted as to their preference. Wisdom will be needed here,

the work must be chosen after carefully considering many details. First, the effect of the work upon the great purpose of the undertaking. Second, the adaptability of the work to the girls, and of the girls to the work. Third, the conveniences and conditions; are they favorable to the precise work in hand? For instance, a class in Physical Culture is not likely to be of as much service to country girls as some other work, for the simple reason that they get sufficient exercise in their ordinary round of daily work. True, they are far from being physically perfect, yet a few personal suggestions and directions is all that they require, and this may be accomplished while some other work is being done. Again, school-girls should not be encouraged in literary work unless such work can be done in connection with their school work. I recommend my method to the average country church. I had a class of twelve girls in the S. S. I desired to interest them in the work of the church; they from the first were enthusiastic, and seemed pleased to be asked to help the church. Accordingly we met on a Saturday afternoon at the parsonage, and after a little, decided to organize a "Dorcas Society." As the name suggests, our purpose was to have a sort of Sewing-School and by the sale of the articles that we made to assist the church in various ways. We have carried out our plan, and for nearly two years have kept up our meetings with more or less regularity. We have enjoyed it. It has been helpful to the girls, and we have been

able to help the church in several ways, in a financial way some over fifty dollars.

We introduced a variety of work into our meetings. We studied the Bible together, we read from interesting books, one would read while the rest were sewing. We planned for entertainments and sales. We took a little physical-culture work in the line of drills. Our meetings have been so conducted and conversation so directed as to lend themselves to the greatest possible usefulness. Freedom to do what circumstances require and wisdom directs, has proven the best method for us. In this way I have been able to bring up and discuss a great many subjects that I could not have touched upon in any other way. It has helped to keep up the interest of the girls, not only in the meetings, but also in the church and its work.

III. The next thing to decide, is the choice of time and place of meetings. This will have to be governed almost wholly by local circumstances. Saturday afternoon ; sometimes every week, sometimes every other week, has been most convenient for us. The girls have come to my home.

IV. The organization, officers and constitution will require attention. I advise a simple organization. This will give the girls a little practice in self-control and dignity, as well as in parliamentary law. Too extensive organization is not helpful unless that be the aim of the society.

If I may be allowed to make a few additional suggestions in closing, I would like to refer again to the aim and purpose of any and all lines of work or methods adopted. We must never lose sight of the fact that the supreme purpose of our undertaking is the formation of character. With all wisdom and patience we will contrive to impress the girls with the fact that they are to live forever, and that this life is the school to prepare them for a higher existence. This should be ever in the mind of the superintendent. I would emphasize again, the relation that the society as a whole, and the girls in particular hold to the church. This is an important point, while the aim is the cultivation of the spiritual life of each individual, it will be well to impress the girls with the value of the church to them, and to the community, and seek to make them see that the church needs and is worthy of their support. If the girls are all professed Christians, they should be led ever up and on to higher plains of individual and social salvation. If they are not all Christians, constant prayer and earnest work should be given them with the confidence that nothing will be lost or fail of its reward.

CHAPTER XII.

Sociological Canvass.

It needs no argument of mine to prove that every pastor should know just as much as possible about the people with whom and for whom he is working. I need not argue either, that he cannot know much, certainly not all that he ought to know, and with the certainty that he ought to know it, from mere hearsay or casual observation. A careful study of the circumstances and conditions of every family, and of the community as a whole, is an absolute necessity to a wise and lasting work. This necessitates a thorough canvass and careful tabulation of every fact and phenomenon investigated.

The country pastor, as a rule, is a hard working man, he does not spare himself. All that he has and is, he gives to the church and its work, and yet the work when judged by its results, is often superficial and fruitless. This can be accounted for partly on the ground of short pastorates. The average pastorate is so short that one has hardly time to plow and sow the seed to say nothing about reaping the harvest. True, no good seed sowing is ever in vain, often the new

pastor enters into the labors of his predecessor, sometimes reaping a bountiful harvest. And yet, no two pastors are able to do precisely the same work with each and every one. Short pastorates are harmful to the work of the church and the kingdom.

But this will by no means account for the small harvest, another cause is apparent, the work is not done with wisdom and discretion. Love may abound and energy be unlimited, yet if wisdom is lacking, the work cannot succeed. One may shoot with a strong desire to kill, and an ambition worthy of a skilled marksman, yet if he has not experience and shoots into the air, the arrow is sure to fall to the ground.

Too much of our preaching is beating the air. People marveled at Jesus Christ, because, as they said, He "Spoke with authority." People marvel at the preacher to-day because he speaks with so little authority. A thorough sociological canvass of his community would furnish the pastor with material for instruction and edification that would cause the people to marvel and to recognize his authority. When one can appeal to facts and figures, and illustrate with concrete examples then his power is increased a hundred fold.

I know of no work that will give to the pastor so much real power and enable him to work so successfully, as will a thorough knowledge of the facts obtained by a wise investigation into the conditions in which the people live and labor. This work re-

quires time. If done thoroughly, from two to four years will be necessary to complete it satisfactorily, but when once done it will be of untold help to the pastor, and of lasting good to the church and community. The work must be done by the pastor, very little help can be used except indirectly, and when it is done it belongs to the pastor, but of course he will leave so much of it to the church, and incoming pastor as is not private, the outline and main facts will be of great help to the new pastor and of no value to the retiring pastor. A great many facts will come to light that are the sole property of the one discovering them and must be used if used at all, personally and privately.

Don't act the spy, don't be a traitor. Anything that you have any right to know, ask for frankly, you'll be told more than you will care to hear, and if you find it hard to keep a secret don't listen to one. Keep your eyes and ears open from the moment you enter the new field, but don't begin a general investigation or canvass until you are positive that the people have perfect confidence in you as a true and trusted friend, not that you are at any time or under any condition to pry into family secrets or personal matters, but you will need to be on such terms with them as to enable you to talk freely with them and they with you upon matters of religion and their personal hindrances and helps in the struggle of life.

Almost every pastor makes a sort of religious canvass of his parish, but rarely is a good and lasting work done, partly I suppose because its value is not realized and partly because the pastor is not conversant with the best methods of such a canvass. I have been at work for nearly two years with such a work in my present parish and shall here give, for a guide only, the lines of investigation. I have made my list of questions just as full and complete as possible, but I do not know of any question that is superficial. One can easily see what a store of knowledge of facts it will furnish when completed.

BLANK No. 1.

1. *Possessions owned by the family.*

- a. Farm—Number of acres....., value....., owned or rented....., mortgaged....., for how much.....
- b. Vehicles—Number....., value.....
- c. Animals—Number....., value.....
- d. Buildings—Number....., value....., condition.....
- e. Money—Cash....., bank....., mortgages....., houses or lands....., and other place.....
- f. Tools—Kinds....., quality....., value.....
- g. Firearms—Kind....., value....., use.....

2. *Sources of income.*

- a. Profits of farm—Wages....., interest....., rent....., product....., consumed at home....., boarders....., pensions....., friends....., charity....., insurance....., any other source.....

3. *Family name.*

- a. Husband—Age....., nationality....., where born....., age married....., living.....
- b. Wife—Age....., nationality....., where born....., age married....., living.....
- c. Boys—Age....., married....., where living.
- d. Girls—Age....., married....., where living.....
- e. Characteristics—Mental....., physical.....
- f. Peculiarities—.....
- g. Relatives in the home.....
- h. Boarders—.....
- i. Employes—Number....., age....., sex....., nationality....., when paid....., associate with the family....., where is their home.....
- j. How long resident of the town....., state..... U. S., farm.....
- k. Keep a strict account of expenses.....
- l. Any college men or women in the family.....

4. *Arrangements for home life.*

- a. House—Size....., painted... .., color....., surroundings....., rooms....., size....., windows....., house light or dark....., furniture....., ventilation....., cellar wet or dry....., drainage....., water supply....., lighting....., bathing facilities....., distance of barn from house....., where put ashes....., where is privy.....
- b. Protection agencies—Against fire....., against thieves....., against disease....., against accident....., heating....., clothing....., etc.....
- c. Arrangements for home industry—Utensils for cooking food....., sweeping....., washing....., sewing....., making butter....., etc.....

5. *Social life.*

- a. Books—Number....., kind....., papers—number.....
kind....., pictures—number....., kind....., musical instruments—number....., kind.
- b. How are the Sundays spent....., evenings.....
- c. Social meetings—Parties....., calls....., visiting.....
- d. Amusements—In the home..., outside....., games.....
- e. At what age do the children leave school.....
- f. Have they a desire for a higher education....., will they have it.....
- g. Do they read or study at home.....
- h. Are you a member of any society, club, lodge.....

6. *Religious life.*

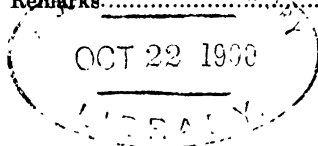
- a. Member of church....., what....., attend where....., regular....., when converted....., how.....
- b. When not attending church what do you do Sundays.....
- c. Have you any objections to the church.....
- d. Do your children go to S. S.....
- e. If not why not.....
- f. Do you have grace said at the table.....
- g. Do you have a family altar.....
- h. Do you attend the prayer service.....
- i. If not why not.....
- j. What are the hindrances to regular church attendance.....
- k. What style of preaching do you like.....
- l. What do you think of revivals.....
- m. Do you think that Christianity is on the decline here.....
- n. What is the greatest need of the church to-day.....
- o. What is the greatest fault of church members.. ...

Pathological Conditions.

- a. Extreme poverty or luxury.....
- b. Mode of securing income, honest, or dishonest.....
- c. Theft....., waste....., extravagancies.....
- d. Oppression by landlord.....
- e. Family quarrels.....
- f. Neglected discipline of children.....
- g. Separation or divorce.....
- h. Sexual evil.....
- i. Children worked too hard....., not enough.....
- j. School neglected.....
- k. Illegitimate children.....
- l. Marriage relation strained.....
- m. Childless families.....
- n. Diseases.....
- o. Persons in prison....., number....., offences.....
- p. Children in house of correction....., number....., reason why there.....
- q. Property acquired....., lost.....
- r. Paupers....., how relieved....., feeble-minded....., cripples....., deformed.....
- s. Illiterate....., superstitious....., evil books....., minds....., pictures....., language.....

8. *Miscellaneous.*

- a. Does farming pay....., are you dissatisfied with farming....., do the boys and girls like to remain on the farm.....
- b. Do you carry life insurance.....
- c. How often do you go into Burlington.....
- d. How often do you get your mail.....
- e. Which works the harder the man or the woman.....
- f. Remarks.....



BLANK No. 2.

1. Family name..... Occupation..... Where born.....
2. Husband's name..... Nationality..... Where born.....
3. Wife's name..... Nationality..... Where born.....
4. Boys....., age, in school..... in S. S.....
5. Girls....., age....., in school....., in S. S.....
6. Relatives.....
7. Boarders.....
8. How long a resident of farm....., town....., state.....,
U. S.....
9. Does farming pay.....
10. Are the children satisfied to remain on farm.....
11. Do you carry a life insurance.....
12. Are you a member of any society....., club.....,
lodge.....
13. Are you a member of the Church....., what....., at-
tend regular.....
14. What do you do on Sundays.....
15. When was you converted....., how.....
16. Do you have grace said at the table.....
17. Do you have a family altar.....
18. Is religion on the decline in this community.....
19. What is the greatest fault of the Church.....
20. What is its greatest need.....

Blank No. 1 is not to be used publicly, it is for my own special guidance. Blank No. 2 I often take with me on my rounds and ask the questions personally ; there are none here but what are legitimate and admittedly within the sphere of the pastor. I have found no trouble in getting the answers whatever. It has proven one of the best introductions to

the religious condition of the family and its individual members that I have ever found. I recommend Blank No. 2 to every pastor who is desirous of doing personal work with his people.

It may at first appear to some, an almost impossible task to get answers to all of the above questions, even to those who appreciate the value of such information, the possibility of getting it may seem questionable. I cannot, of course, here explain the value of each and every question, or give hard and fast rules for securing the answer to each and every question, but it is not as difficult as it at first appears. To one accustomed to this kind of work in the city, the questions will doubtless appear personal, but in the country all one has to do is to keep their eyes and ears open and they will soon learn all they wish to know. I will suggest a method by which one can without any great difficulty learn all that it is necessary to know in a very short time.

Select a suitable season, when the family are all at home, and not especially busy. Make an appointment, if you please, with the people, tell them that you will come and spend the day or afternoon. Take blank No. 2 along with you. Keep your eyes and ears open from the minute that you come in sight of the house. You will have learned the number, condition and approximate value of the buildings even before you greet your friend ; rough estimates are all that you will care for here. Help put up your horse,

show a little interest in the barn, and the horses and cattle, look things all over before you go into the house ; in fifteen minutes time you will have learned all that you wish to know about the barn and its contents from the ordinary conversation.

When you get into the house make yourself at home, be free and easy, talk about such things as will be likely to interest the family. You can turn the conversation now and then into such channels as will lead to the topics of your search, and without seeming inquisitive get stores of information, just such as you want. After a little when conversation seems to lag draw out your blank and explain what you are trying to do, and explain the benefit of such information in your work for the church, people will gladly and freely answer any question on your list and many more. This will open the door to an opportunity that you would have had great difficulty in gaining in any other way. You can now talk freely with the family regarding their relation to the church and its work, and even becoming more personal you can inquire into their spiritual life. You will not fail to notice and draw out the children. You will have secured your information, encouraged the family in their Christian life, and inspired them by your frankness and personal interest in their higher life.

When you get home, if your observation has been keen and your memory good, you will be able to answer almost every question in Blank No. 1.

There are a few questions that you won't be able to answer from this visit. For instance, you wouldn't want to ask any man if his farm was mortgaged, or if he received any aid from charity, if he tells you of his own accord all good and well, but they are too personal to ask outright; these questions you will have to get answered as best you can, and you will not find it a difficult task, keep your ears and eyes open and you will learn whose farm is mortgaged and who is a subject of charity.

Learn by heart every question on Blank No. 1. Always carry a note book with you, and every day will add to your stock of information. In money matters exact dollars and cents are not a necessity. You need not inquire of every last family concerning many of the questions you wish answered,—for instance, as to bathing facilities, or pathological conditions, and many other lines of information that are valuable for you to know. There are many ways of finding out these things except by direct interrogation. If the town clerk is your friend, as he ought to be, you can get a wealth of information from him and his books. The post master will give you a list of periodicals, number and kind, that pass through his office. You will have two or three trusted friends in the parish, among the older members, who can be of great assistance to you.

I need not go into details any further, the value of this kind of work will be apparent to all. I think

the ways and means of doing it will reveal themselves to anyone undertaking it. A zealous but wise investigation of community, family and individual life will increase the power and fruitfulness of the country pastor's ministry many fold.



Appendix.

I. 1. I have not attempted in the foregoing work to cover the whole ground of Institutional work in country churches. There are many other methods of work that have been, or could be used by the country church and as truly classified Institutional, as any that I have herein presented. The preceding pages treat only a few of the methods in common use and those that seemed to me to be the most desirable and helpful. I append here a few other lines of work that may be of service to some.

2. I take it for granted that Sunday School, Christian Endeavor and Missionary work have a place in every country church. On the other hand I can hardly conceive it possible for the country church to take up all the lines of work that find a place in the city church. For instance, the Dispensary, the Day Nursery, the College, the Baths, etc. These the average country church cannot engage in, only in the most indirect way. The pastor of the country church, however, must be a versatile man and equal to any emergency.

II. THE BIBLE CLASS.—The Bible class is one of the most interesting and profitable methods that can be employed, where the conditions favor it,

in the building up and advancement of the Church and Kingdom. It has also, in the hands of a competent teacher, a great power in drawing out and building up in the Faith, individual men and women. Some pastors have turned their mid-week prayer meeting into a Bible class, and have found it a great improvement. Others find an afternoon or evening most advantageous. If a layman can be found who is qualified, and will give it the required time, it may be made a power.

III. THE CHORAL CHOIR.—This is one of the helpful methods employed by some churches. It serves a variety of purposes. It is conducive to good church music. It provides a training for untrained voices. It draws out some who would not be interested in any other line of Church work. The country church is always more or less troubled with its music. For its own sake, something of this nature is a necessity. Children and young people are too often neglected by the church, and there is nothing more helpful and interesting to them, as well as to the church, than a Singing School of some kind.

IV. THE BROTHERHOOD OF ANDREW AND PHILIP.—The general Secretary of this organization is the Rev. C. E. Wychoff, Irvington, N. Y. It is one of the most helpful and fruitful methods for use among young men ever inaugurated. Its object is "The spread of Christ's kingdom among

young men." The rules of the Brotherhood are two, the rule of prayer and the rule of service ; the rule of prayer is to pray daily for the spread of Christ's kingdom among young men ; the rule of service is to make an earnest effort each week to bring at least one young man within hearing of the Gospel.

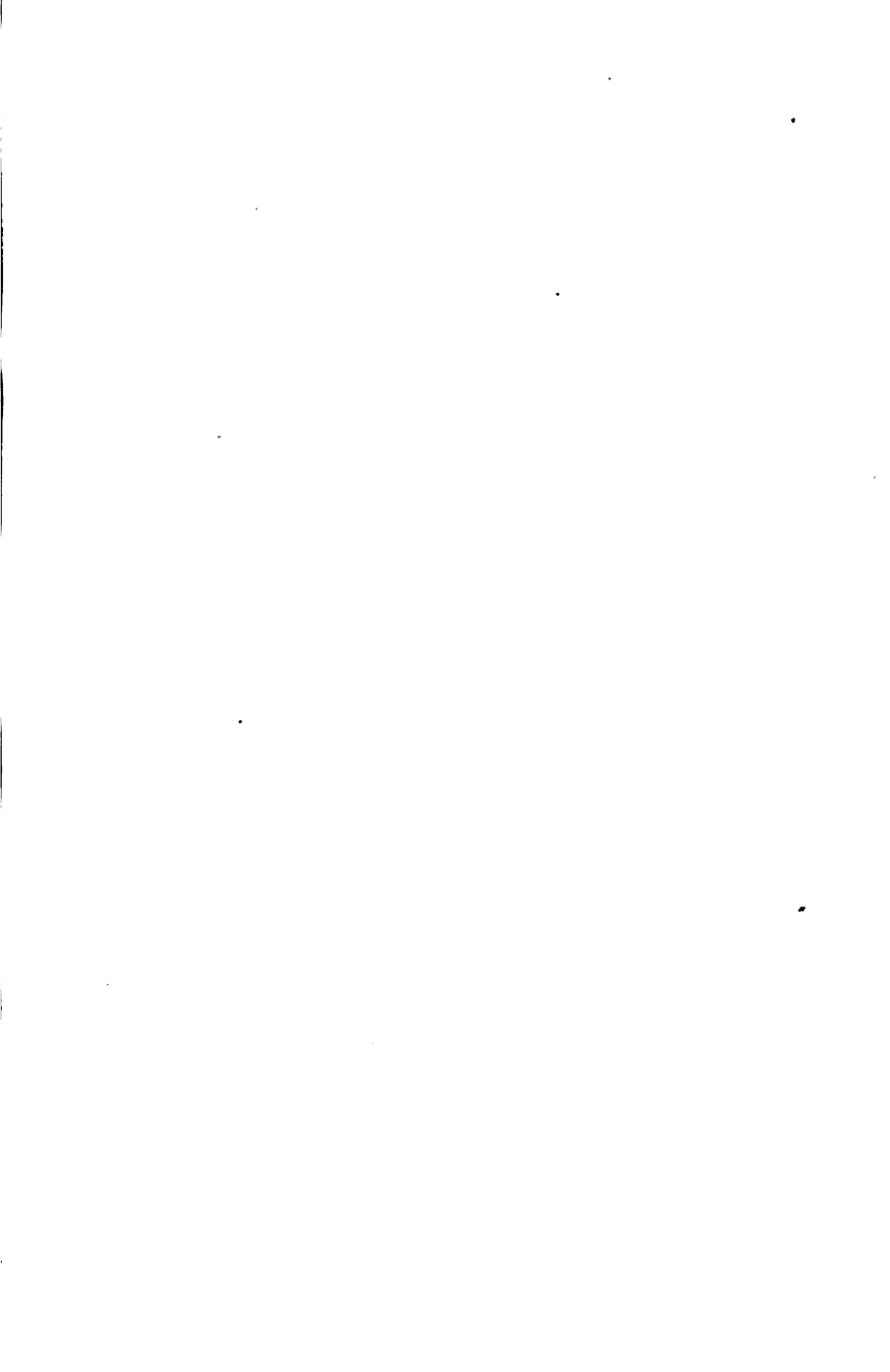
V. THE PLEASANT SUNDAY AFTER-NOON.—Not all country churches, and perhaps not but very few, would find it convenient or profitable to attempt a special service, for men only, on Sunday afternoon. Some of the larger churches in the villages might find it helpful to inaugurate such a movement, but distinctively country churches whose male membership is composed largely of farmers, know how difficult it is to get a good average attendance even once upon the Sabbath. Where this is practicable it is fruitful.

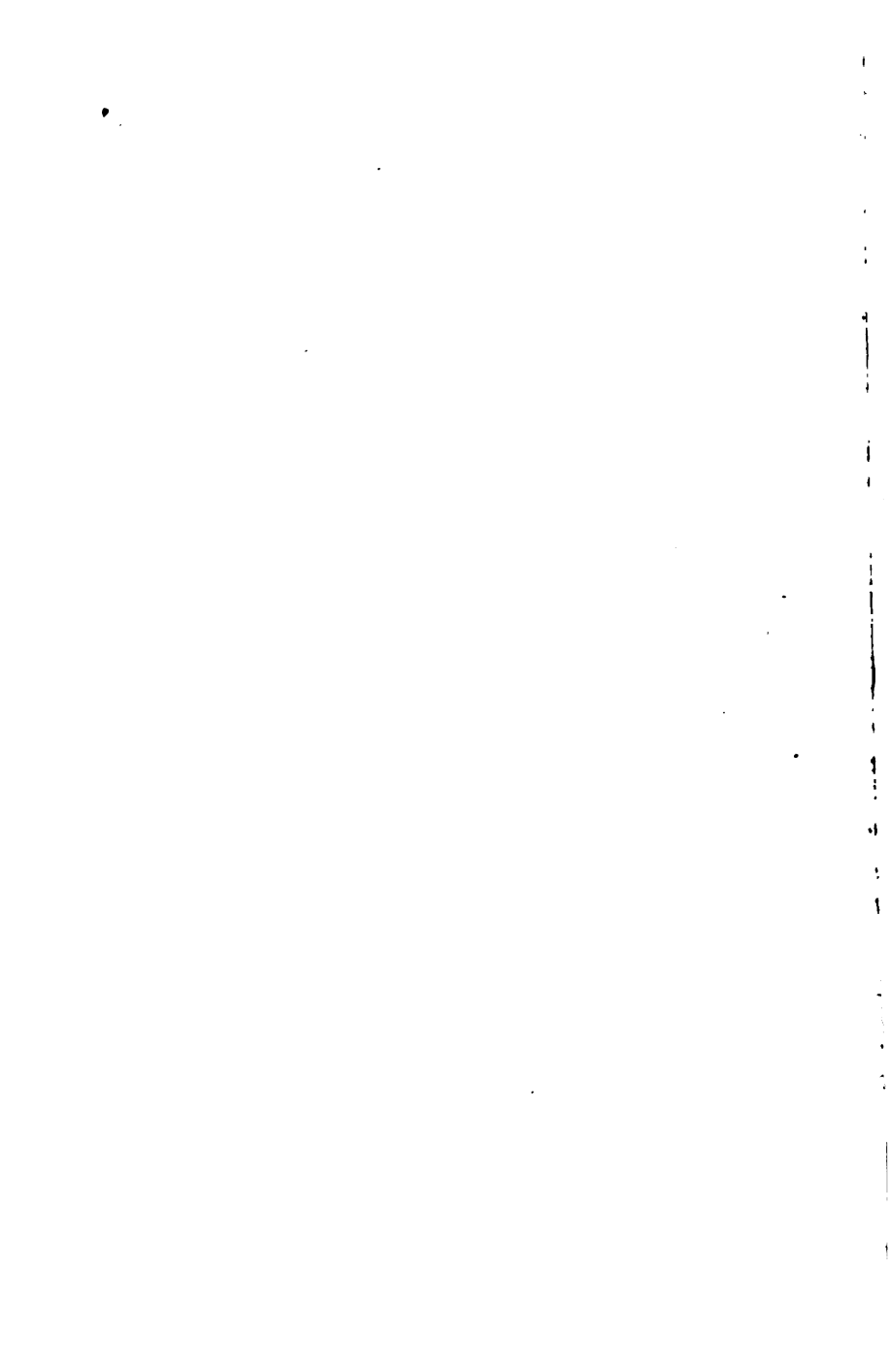
VI. THE PASTOR'S CABINET.—This Cabinet has been helpful to almost every minister, sometimes for one purpose and sometimes for another. I have found it very helpful as an advisory council in the spiritual direction of my labors with the people. A good selection of a very few of the best personal workers in the church will often be of great service to the pastor in his endeavors to reach the people and bring them to a knowledge of Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Every pastor should have such a cabinet, he will find it helpful in many ways.

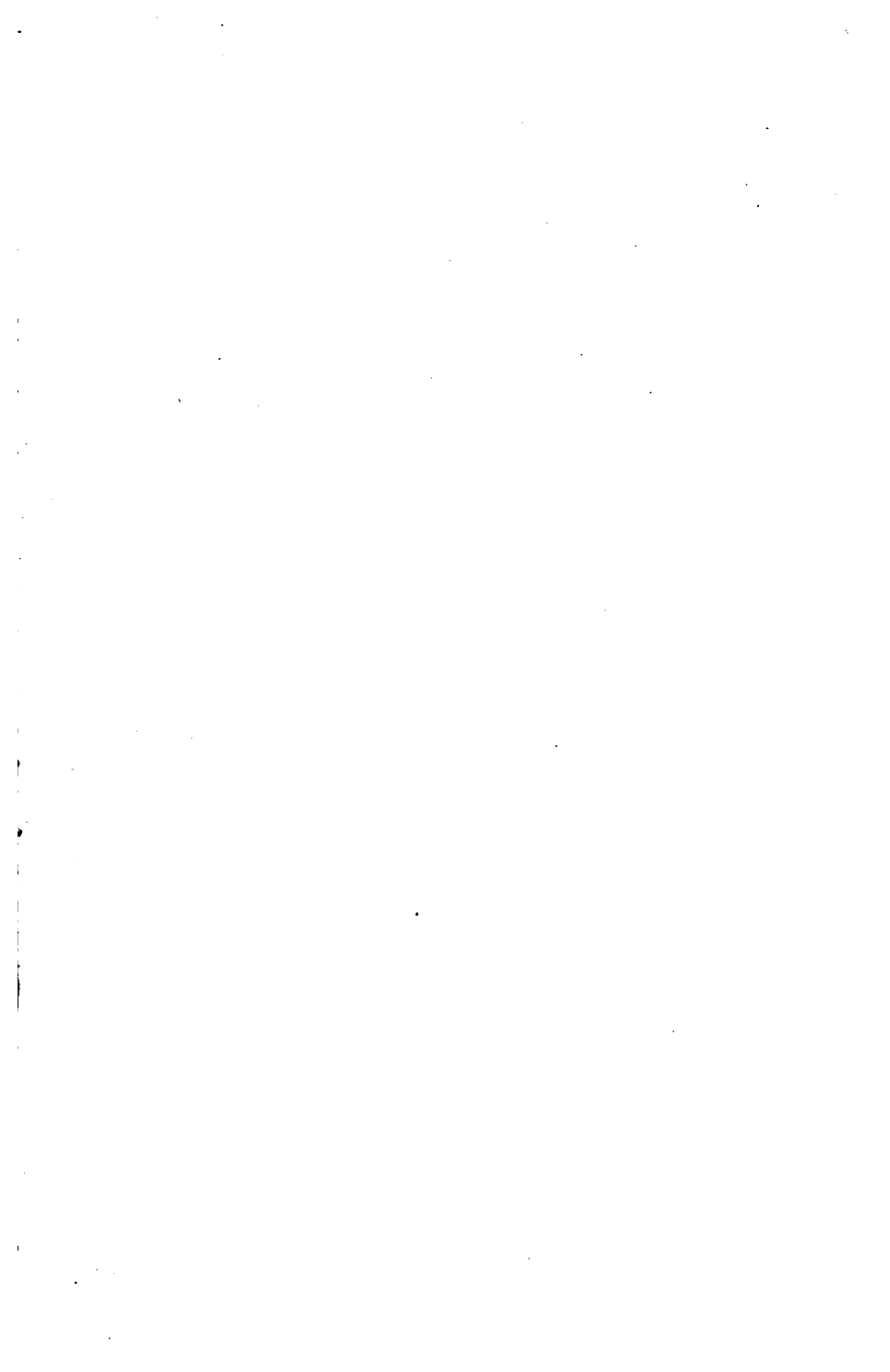
VII. The following lines of work have been taken up with more or less helpfulness in different churches: Gymnasium and Physical Culture classes, Industrial work, Village Improvement Societies, Mothers' Meetings, Kindergarten Work, Good Citizenship Clubs, Literary and Debating Societies, and many evening classes for instruction along different lines. Let each church adopt that line or lines of work best adapted to their peculiar conditions and local circumstances, and set all the people to work. The people can be, must be, drawn in and held, this the Church can accomplish only by following the Master's example—He went about doing good, preaching, teaching and working.

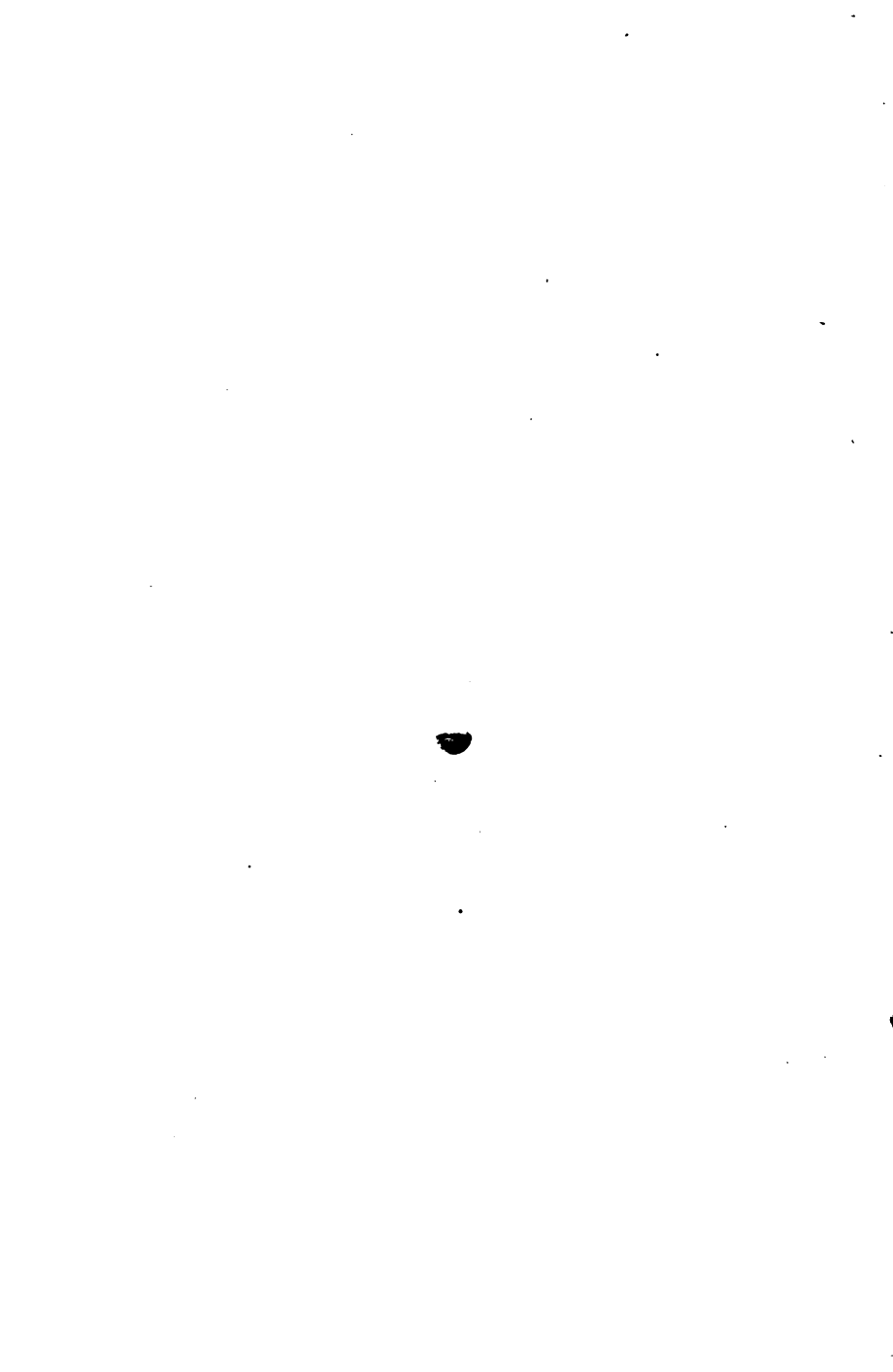












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